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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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EXCLUSIVE Q&A
GARY AYLES



The sportscar and tin-top ace takes on another challenge: the MN readers' questions! Starts p16



Hill, Morgan and Thompson are all back for more in UK's most prestigious contest

TITLE THREATS CONFIRM BTCC RETURN FOR 2023 SEASON



Hill will be back in the MB Motorsport car

By Matt James

Three leading drivers have confirmed deals to return to the British Touring Car Championship for 2023.

Jake Hill, who finished third in the points this year with an MB Motorsport-branded WSR BMW 330e M Sport, will return for another assault on the tin-top crown. He will be joined in the team by Adam Morgan, who switches over from his family-run Ciceley Motorsport operation that will now focus on historic racing instead.

The third signing is the 2022 Jack Sears Trophy victor Bobby Thompson, who will remain with Team Hard to handle its Cupra R. The Essex racer has set his sights on claiming the Independents Trophy.

Thompson said: "I'm under no illusions as to the work needed to take the next step, but I believe that both myself and the team are ready."

Full story, page 4

Thompson (left) and Morgan rejoin the grid

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NEWS**

FEATURE

WHY BTCC FORD BECAME THE FOCUS IN 2022

How Motorbase turned its tin-top season around, p14



INSIGHT

COLES TURNS HEADS ON THE HILLS

The teenager who is ripping up the hills, p24



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COMMENT

Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Ben Lawrence



There is some concern about the future of several leading national rally series in 2023

PUTTING THE 2023 PLANS IN PLACE

The news that Mattia Binotto has stepped down from his role as Ferrari's team principal was hardly a shock. The Italian team echoed some of its 1970s and 1980s form this year when it started with a solid package and then went backwards. It, effectively, snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

Whoever the new incumbent turns out to be, they will have the spotlight firmly placed upon them. The need to triumph at Ferrari is always turned up to maximum, and any failures are analysed, criticised and flagged up by the success-hungry domestic media. It is a big job, and one where there is no room for failure. Good luck to whoever is brave enough to take on that role.

There are some choppy waters facing several national rally championships at the moment too: for six of the major series in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales – including the British Asphalt and the British Historic Rally Championships – as you can read on page nine. The series were put out to tender and the domestic governing body, Motorsport UK, has yet to finalise agreements with promoters. This might not sound like too much of a problem, but the new season is only just over a couple of months away and planning, let alone funding, these competitions, is not something that can be put in place in a matter of weeks. It really is reaching crisis point and there needs to be a resolution found pretty quickly. Our fingers are crossed.

Graham Keilloh talks to prime national racing organiser, the British Racing and Sports Car Club, in his feature on page 22. We find out that the prospects are looking good for one of the busiest organisations on the club racing landscape and it is already looking ahead and planning initiatives for 2023.

We speak to three-time British Touring Car title-winner Ash Sutton, who reflects on a season where a switch to the Napa UK-backed Motorbase Performance team brought him to the cusp of the BTCC crown. He and the boffins at HQ are raring to go for their 2023 attack.

The man in the readers' Q&A spotlight is Gary Ayles. The rising single-seater star of the late-1980s went on to forge a successful tin-top career with a three-year stint as a factory Peugeot driver in Italy and he tackled Le Mans on three occasions. He then moved into team ownership in the British Touring Car Championship too, and he has a refreshingly honest outlook on his career. The interview starts on page 16.

Matt James

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RACING NEWS

BINOTTO LEAVES FERRARI AS A RESULT OF POOR 2022 FORM
Italian team set to appoint new team principal in the new year

By Matt James

Ferrari is searching for a new team principal following the resignation of Mattia Binotto last week.

The Italian team under-performed this season and there were several strategy blunders. Binotto tendered his resignation last week in the wake of the season in which the Scuderia finished more than 200 points behind title winners Red Bull.

In a statement, Binotto said: "I leave a united and growing team. A strong team,

ready, I'm sure, to achieve the highest goals, to which I wish all the best for the future. I think it is right to take this step at this time as hard as this decision has been for me. I would like to thank all the people at the Gestione Sportiva who have shared this journey with me, made up of difficulties but also of great satisfaction."

The team has said that it will appoint a new principal early in the new year, with Alfa Romeo's Frederic Vasseur tipped as the favourite to move into the role.

Speaking just before Binotto's

departure, driver Charles Leclerc said that the team must learn lessons from its slump in 2022. "Obviously, if I take a step back, considering from how far we come from last year, it's an amazing step forward," he said. "But obviously I cannot ignore our middle part of the season that has been super-frustrating. We went from leading with quite a bit of points to being behind by quite a bit of points. And that was a frustrating. We just need to take all the mistakes that we've done this year and try to improve for next year."



Vasseur (left) has been tipped as a possible replacement for Binotto

IN BRIEF

Patrick Tambay

Two-time grand prix winner Patrick Tambay has passed away. The former Ferrari, McLaren and Renault racer's death was announced on Sunday morning. The Frenchman, who was 73, won the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim in 1982 after he was called up to the Ferrari team following the death of his friend Gilles Villeneuve. He also won the San Marino GP in 1983 for the Scuderia.

Chinese taken away

F1 bosses have confirmed that the Chinese Grand Prix, which was scheduled for April 16, has been axed from the calendar for 2023 amid the country's Covid restrictions. Grand prix chiefs are seeking a replacement event, and a race at Portimao in Portugal has been tipped although nothing has yet been confirmed.

Palou at McLaren

Spaniard Alex Palou, who will race for Chip Ganassi in IndyCar in 2023, will be McLaren's reserve driver when his commitments in the USA allow. The 2021 IndyCar title winner drove the McLaren during free practice at this year's American Grand Prix and has also tested at Barcelona and at the Red Bull Ring. McLaren has also confirmed that Briton Jake Hughes will complete its line-up in Formula E, partnering Rene Rast.

Chadwick's American shot

Three-time W Series title winner Jamie Chadwick has joined Andretti Autosport to contest the Indy NXT series, formerly known as Indy Lights, in the 2023 season. The 24-year-old will link up with Louis Foster and Hunter McElrea in the team. The season starts at St Petersburg, Florida, on March 3-5.

MORGAN MOVES TO WSR AS CICELEY AXES BTCC ATTACK



Ciceley's BMWs will not feature on the grid for the 2023 BTCC season

Race-winning British Touring Car Championship team Ciceley Motorsport will not return to the series in 2023 and its driver Adam Morgan will race for WSR.

The team, which joined the BTCC in 2013, is owned and operated by Russell Morgan, Adam's father. The team has now decided to switch its focus to historic motorsport programmes instead. Ciceley won 12 BTCC races with 11 victories for Morgan and one for his 2022 team-mate George Gamble.

Adam Morgan, who was ninth in the points this season in the WSR-built BMW 330e M Sport, said: "I'm very happy, yet sad at the same time. Most of the team has been with us since the beginning of my career in 2010. We have definitely had many more ups than downs and

shared some amazing experiences, but the time has come for a change. It's not the end though. The Ciceley name will live on in historic racing."

One of the team's TOCA BTCC Licences has been handed over to WSR, which will take its attack to four cars, while the other has gone to Speedworks Motorsport (see story below).

Morgan's move to WSR was confirmed late last week. "He's an excellent driver who's proved himself capable of winning races in a variety of cars and of acting as the team leader," said WSR boss Dick Bennetts. "With Adam onboard as the first of what will be a strong line-up, I'm confident of our ability to challenge for the Drivers', Teams' and Manufacturers' Constructors' Championships in 2023."

WINNERS HILL AND THOMPSON TIE UP BTCC DEALS FOR 2023

Race winner Jake Hill and Jack Sears Trophy winner Bobby Thompson have confirmed that they will remain with WSR and Team Hard respectively to continue to chase British Touring Car Championship glory in 2023.

Hill was in the hunt for the title in his first season in the rear-wheel-drive MB Motorsport-branded BMW 330e M Sport, which was operated by WSR. He took three wins on his way to third place in

2022. Hill, 28, said "For me, last year felt like a year where I truly arrived in the championship. To be able to have that consistency in our programme heading into 2023 can only be a huge help, for what will be a first for me in my time in the BTCC. There's no hiding from what our aim will be heading into the new season – it's now a case of getting our heads down and getting to work."

Thompson, meanwhile, will continue

with Kent-based Team Hard to drive its Cupra R in a second season. Thompson, 26, took the car's maiden outright podium at Brands Hatch last season on his way to 14th in the points.

"We have a huge opportunity to challenge for the Independents Trophy next year," said Thompson. "I'm under no illusions as to the work needed to take the next step, but I believe that both myself and the team are ready."



Thompson has a trophy target



Brawn steps down

BRAWN TO STEP DOWN FROM FORMULA 1 MANAGING DIRECTOR ROLE

Formula 1 managing director Ross Brawn has stepped down from his role in the sport's owner Liberty Media.

He made the announcement in the wake of the season-closing Abu Dhabi Grand Prix in late

November. The Briton has not given any hints on his future role. He has been linked with a return to Ferrari, although that is unlikely.

In a column on the Formula 1 website, Brawn, now 68, said that

he thought he was leaving grand prix racing in a strong position. He wrote: "My time with Formula 1 is now coming to an end. I'll miss the involvement I've had, the comradeship and the friendship you get in the environment of F1.

"I'm pleased with where we've got to. I think there's been real change in the last six years since I joined the management team – and I feel happy about that. F1 today is as strong as it's ever been."

SPEEDWORKS AND WSR TO EXPAND IN BTCC

There will be three Toyota Corollas on the British Touring Car Championship grid in 2023 after the Speedworks team has taken over the licence of the departing Ciceley Motorsport crew (see story above).

The Cheshire-based Speedworks team ran Rory Butcher to fifth place in this season's points alongside

Ricky Collard, who has now stepped away from motorsport. In addition to the expansion for Speedworks, WSR will also operate four cars – the MB Motorsport TOCA BTCC Licence (TBL) for Jake Hill, the ex-Ciceley TBL for Adam Morgan and two others. There have been 29 TBLs granted for 2023.



There will be an expanded presence from Speedworks in 2023 BTCC

TOCA BTCC LICENCES IN 2023

TEAM	TBLs HELD
Excel8 Motorsport	4
Team Dynamics	2
Aiden Moffat Racing	2
Motorbase Performance	4
Team Hard	4
Speedworks Motorsport	3
WSR	4
Power Maxed Racing	2
BTC Racing	3
Carl Boardley Motorsport	1

RACING NEWS



Accessible Clubsport revealed

MINI CLUB-LEVEL CONTEST LAUNCHED

An accessible Mini Challenge club-level contest will make its debut in 2023 in the new Clubsport championship.

It is the brainchild of former Mini Challenge racers Tom Halliwell and Robin Austin and will operate as an affiliate to the existing JCW and Trophy classes, providing an entry point onto the Mini Challenge ladder.

It will have three classes: Cooper S open to the R53 and R56 models at a tightly regulated level of tune; Cooper Am for the R50 variant used in the Mini Challenge Trophy, but with a more flexible set of technical rules; and the Open class for any Mini with a maximum power-to-weight of 220bhp. Organisers received more than 40 expressions of interest before registrations opened this week.

There will be 15 races across six meetings in 2023, which includes supporting the British Truck Racing Championship at Thruxton, headlining the early August Brands Hatch Mini Festival and joining the Mini Challenge Trophy at Silverstone.

Austin said: "Both Tom and myself were aware that there were a number of drivers out there who either own Minis that aren't eligible for the main Mini Challenge, or who don't have the budget required to compete in the Cooper [Trophy] or JCW classes. Rather than those people competing in a range of different multi-marque championships, we decided to investigate the possibility of creating a new championship."

CALENDAR

Mini Challenge Clubsport 2023

DATE	CIRCUIT	FORMAT
April 15-16	Cadwell Park	3x12min
May 20-21	Mallory Park	2x15min
July 8-9	Thruxton	2x15min
Aug 5-6	Brands Hatch	3x15min
Sep 16-17	Silverstone National	3x12min
Oct 14-15	Donington Park GP	2x15min

QUEEN JOINS FORTEC FOR GB4 IN 2023

Formula Ford shootout winner uses £20K prize to join team that took '22 title

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Queen takes Fortec seat

By Graham Keillor

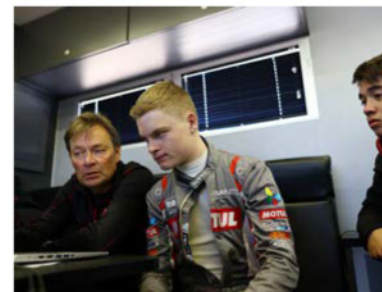
GB4's National Formula Ford shootout winner Colin Queen will race in the GB4 championship next season with Fortec Motorsport that took Nikolas Taylor to this year's inaugural title.

Seventeen-year-old American Queen finished runner-up in this year's National Formula Ford standings, and he then won the shootout, held at Snetterton in October, for the top three teenagers in the National contest. His shootout prize was £20,000 from organiser MotorSport Vision to put towards a GB4 drive.

Queen is the first 2023 GB4 driver signing for the Fortec team. The squad also laid on the GB4 cars for the Snetterton shootout.

Queen said: "Since winning the shootout it's been my target to finalise my place on the grid in GB4, and I couldn't be happier that it's coming with Fortec."

"Having worked together on a few occasions since the shootout, I knew this was the team I wanted to be with for next



Queen has worked with team

year, and I'm happy that we've been able to finalise this so quickly. They won the title last year, and I am working hard to be able to replicate that level of success with the team in 2023."

Fortec team manager Ollie Dutton said: "We've seen so much promise from Colin on the occasions he's been in the car, we're very pleased that he's chosen to race with us in GB4 next year. He's shown what he's capable of in his short career so far, and we think we can help to push him on to the next level."

PRAGA MAKES BRITCAR RETURN

Praga R1s are set to race as a class in a Praga-backed prototype category within the Britcar Endurance Championship next year having run on their own grid this season.

The Praga Cup UK one-make championship for the high-performance R1 completed its inaugural season this year, the R1 having previously run in the Britcar Endurance Championship including with its own class in 2021.

For 2023 Britcar and Praga have agreed a provisional five-meeting calendar with a new weekend programme of two 25-minute sprint races and one 50-minute endurance race, meaning more R1 races than in 2022.

Organisers expect that R1s will make up the majority of the prototype category grid alongside a variety of manufacturers invited by Britcar, and the Praga Cup's Pro-Am structure of 2022 will be retained.

Praga Cars UK CEO Mark Harrison said: "Our vision for a 20-plus grid of

CALENDAR

Provisional Praga Cup 2023

DATE	VENUE/CIRCUIT
March 25-26	Silverstone Grand Prix
April 22-23	Brands Hatch Indy
May 27-29	Oulton Park
September 16-17	Snetterton 300
October 14-15	Donington Grand Prix

R1s still stands as the Britcar team use their experience and enthusiasm to grow prototype racing opportunities in the UK. Praga is backing Britcar through 2023 to ensure a successful race series for all entries and a stepping-stone to an even stronger grid in 2024."

Praga has also unveiled an all-new road-legal 700bhp hypercar called the Bohema. The car is intended to be suitable for the track – with GT3 performance – and the road. The Bohema was inspired and tested by Formula 1 and IndyCar star Romain Grosjean, who is a Praga ambassador.



Praga-backed Britcar prototype category will have five events

BRSCC could put on its own Caterham events



BRSCC STILL EYES PUTTING ON CATERHAM CONTESTS

British Racing and Sports Car Club bosses are open to starting their own Caterham contests after losing the factory's suite of championships from their line-up from next season.

Caterham championships, having operated with BRSCC since the 1990s, will race with the British Automobile Racing Club from 2023.

BRSCC chairman Peter Daly told Motorsport News: "We do know that there

are alternative Caterham championships out there and it's not beyond our capabilities to look at how the Caterham market pans out over the next year or two when we might start something ourselves."

"They've introduced 1000 Caterhams into the market in the last 20 years so there's plenty of Caterhams out there and they don't all necessarily want to race with the factory."

"We're always keeping stuff in mind."

We introduced the idea of a Caterham relay race back in 2019 where you'd got teams of four cars. And that was one opportunity of developing Caterham but it wasn't supported fully by the factory in the second year so it didn't take place. As Caterham is with the factory they have their own restrictions on what they can and can't do."

● Read our special feature on BRSCC on p22-23.

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RACING NEWS



Elite will race two new Artura GT4s

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Graham Holbon, Peter Scherer



Ives sees GT chances for drivers

ELITE IN NEW EUROPEAN McLAREN ATTACK

Norfolk-based multiple-champion squad to race two all-new Arturas in GT4 European Series

By Graham Keilloh

Multiple championship-winning Elite Motorsport will embark on a new continental endurance adventure in 2023 racing a pair of all-new McLaren Artura GT4s in the GT4 European Series.

The Norfolk-based squad has totalled

considerable title success across several Ginetta championships in the past eight years, and also expanded recently into single-seater racing and won multiple races in this year's GB3 and GB4 contests.

The European move replaces Elite's effort in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup – which is scrapped for 2023 – wherein it won the 2019 and '21 drivers' titles

with Harry King and Adam Smalley respectively.

The 2023 GT4 Euro series has six rounds across mainland Europe, each featuring two one-hour races, plus there's a season-ending six-hour non-championship race. Discussions are underway at Elite with potential drivers for the campaign. The team is scheduled to

take delivery early next year of its new Artura GT4s, the successor model to the championship-winning 570S.

Elite owner and manager Eddie Ives said: "It opens up fantastic opportunities for Elite and our drivers to go GT racing for the future throughout the world which makes the Artura GT4 the perfect replacement for our GT4 Supercup squad.

"We should have our first Artura delivered soon so that we can start testing early in the new year allowing us to hit the ground running by the time we head to Monza in April for the first races.

"Our plan is the full season in the GT4 European Series but we may do selected races in other GT4 championships as well."

FIESTA RACER BRICKLEY DOUBLES UP ON TITLES

Teenager Jenson Brickley sealed his second successive motorsport title recently when he became the Fiesta ST240 champion following up on his 2021 Fiesta Junior crown.

The Hinckley racer had a Brands Hatch final-race ST240 title showdown in which he passed his championship rival Alistair Kellett on track. The finale's result left him tied on gross points at the table top with Kellett, but Brickley took the crown after dropped scores were applied. His season included three wins, three poles, five fastest laps and four circuit lap records.

"I had a good start and got into the lead after Druids but threw it all away at Clearways and thought I had lost my chance of the title, then I fought back," Brickley said of the title-deciding race. "That last lap felt unbelievable, there were no words."

Brickley, who has a background in karting and short ovals, took a dominant 2021 Junior title with 20Ten Racing. For 2022 he stepped into the senior Fiesta championship, again with 20Ten.

He is eyeing either the JCW Mini Challenge or TCR UK touring car championship for 2023.



Champ Jenson on the button

KNOCKHILL'S BUSY '23 SCHEDULE UNVEILED

Knockhill circuit's bosses anticipate a busy 2023 and vast grids for its TCR UK comeback meeting after unveiling the venue's calendar for next year.

Its additions for 2023 include TCR UK for the first time since 2018 plus a Ferrari Owners' Club weekend. Usual favourites remain such as the British Touring Car Championship, plus Knockhill Motor Sports Club and Scottish Motor Racing Club categories. The track's events

team said it "looks like one their busiest seasons in recent years".

The team added that 2024's Knockhill 50th-anniversary year "will be the biggest and best season yet to be seen at the Fife venue".

Director of events Stuart Gray said: "It is anticipated that around 30 TCR UK touring cars will headline an impressive BRSCC-organised event in July that also features their new Audi TT Cup,

Evolution Trophy as well as the stalwart BMW Compacts, Fiesta Seniors, Fiesta Juniors and other championships.

"This event will also allow the local KMSC-organised ModSports to race with an anticipated grid of 30-plus cars in what will be their showcase event of the year. At the FOC event, their Ferrari Club Classic Series, Hot Lap Challenge and Pista Track Day sessions will be supplemented by local SMRC and KMSC content."



Things are ramping up in Fife



Ginettas will have four-day Silverstone event

GINETTA EVENTS REVEALED

Ginetta next year will race at Cadwell Park for the first time since 2012 plus has revealed more details about its other 2023 standalone event Silverstone's G Fest.

Ginetta's new G Fest will be a four-day June 1-4 meeting racing on both the Grand Prix and National layouts. Further details will follow.

Ginetta bosses in September confirmed a three-year deal to run its categories with British GT from 2023, ending its long-time relationship with the BTCC. The

announcement also outlined an overhaul of Ginetta's categories.

Aside from the two standalone meetings, Ginetta's 2023 schedule follows British GT's UK-based events meaning Ginetta Juniors will race on Silverstone's and Donington Park's Grand Prix layouts for the first time.

There will be nine Ginetta races at all UK British GT events, aside from the Silverstone 500 that has eight. In total there will be 24 races for Juniors, and 23 for GT Academy and the new-for-2023 GT Championship.

LEGENDS DOUBLE CONTEST FOR '23

The Legends Cars championship will add a second championship contest in 2023 for its three meetings on the British Touring Car Championship's support bill at Brands Hatch, Croft and Knockhill.

Legends' three double-header BTCC support slots were announced last month and bosses have confirmed that it will have two standalone championships in 2023. One is for the six races at the BTCC rounds, called the Legends Cars 'BTCC' championship, and the other is a separate five-event Legends Cars championship made up of nine or 10 races.

This latter contest starts at Cadwell Park

on April 15-16 and concludes on the Brands Hatch Indy circuit on November 4-5, at British Truck racing's 'fireworks finale' event. The non-BTCC championship also has a second Brands Hatch visit, for American Speedfest, plus a Snetterton round and one meeting TBC.

Championship owner Phil Cooper said: "We're very excited to officially announce the plan to run as two distinct championships for the new season. With the three race meetings alongside the BTCC next year, it made absolute sense to us for those to be a standalone six-round Legends championship."



Legends racers will have BTCC and non-BTCC titles to go for in 2023

RALLY NEWS

HOW RIVAL RECRUITS COULD PUT HYUNDAI BACK ON TOP IN WRC

Moncet's comments a boost for Hyundai comeback man Breen ahead of 2023 season

Photos: Renault Customer Racing, Skoda Motorsport, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Hyundai hope to tap into Breen's knowledge of M-Sport car

By Graham Lister

Hyundai plans to capitalise on recruiting drivers from the rival M-Sport and Toyota teams as it bids to return to the top of the World Rally Championship.

The South Korean firm won the WRC makes' title in 2020 but struggled with reliability issues in 2021 before being slow to hit the front in 2022 due to delays readying its Rally1 hybrid challenger.

But deputy team chief Julien Moncet believes re-signing Craig Breen from M-Sport and recruiting Esapekka Lappi from World champion outfit Toyota can help its cause in 2023.

"They can make some comparison for the gear ratio, things like that – and for the hybrid strategy, this can be interesting and it can help us understand if we are working in a similar way," Moncet told WRC.com. "But, of course, they don't know everything about the cars they were driving this year. It will be very interesting to hear what they say on the car."

Moncet has also vowed to help Breen rediscover his impressive 2021 form when he claimed three podiums from five starts driving for Hyundai's factory team.

"Craig has had a difficult year [with M-Sport]," Moncet told WRC.com. "But I'm sure we'll

Lappi has swapped to Hyundai for 2023



be able to put him back in the right way. He's a good team player."

Irishman Breen said: "We have secured some very memorable results together in the past, including several runner-up results, so hopefully I will be able to take that a step further. I have followed the team's progress and development with interest this season, and I can see the momentum that has been building. Having the backing of a manufacturer team like Hyundai is special, and I'm sure we'll have plenty more reasons to celebrate next season."

Breen and Lappi visited Hyundai engineers at the team's base in Alzenau, Germany, last month.



Moncet is keen to hear drivers' feedback



Meeke is pleased with the car



The new Fabia RS Rally2 machine

MEEKE A NEW FABIA FAN FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE TESTING

Kris Meeke has told drivers of Skoda's latest-generation Fabia RS Rally2 to get set for a car that's "fast and durable" based on his experience of helping to test and develop the Czech challenger.

Meeke was one of several drivers employed by Skoda Motorsport to ready its latest Rally2 effort for competition.

With the car already a winner following Andreas Mikkelsen's victory on the Lausitz Rallye in Germany last month, Meeke expects more success to follow.

"I was surprised that the new car was absolutely reliable from the first drive," said the Northern Irish star. "I could feel the difference in the chassis, for example. It feels firmer, you can push the car more, you can lean into it more, and that's what's different from the old car. You can see it a lot in Finland, for example, or on the Tarmac in Spain. It's really an advantage. With the regulations for the Rally2 class it's difficult to make any significant progress, but the [new] details will play an interesting role."

Despite being linked to a competitive run in the new Fabia earlier in its development phase, Meeke is not being primed for any rally action in the near future, Motorsport News understands.

Of being called on to test the Fabia RS despite his lack of Rally2 experience, Meeke said: "I have experience with a number of other rally cars, and they all have pedals and a steering wheel and you try to go as fast as possible driving them. I went into this project with a clear head and my opinion of how I feel in the car. I think the engineers appreciated that."

M-SPORT BEWARE AS FIESTA RALLY3-RIVALLING CLIO BREAKS COVER



Renault has been clocking up the miles on its Rally3 Clio

The first car to rival M-Sport's Ford Fiesta Rally3 has been unleashed – with Formula 1 engineers involved in the design of the all-new machine.

Renault's Clio Rally3 is only the second car built to the FIA's affordable four-wheel-drive regulations to break cover and will bring much-needed impetus to the category, which has yet to the attract the major interest it was expected to at

regional and national level.

Since May, Renault has been testing its challenger to the Fiesta with development running concluding in Spain late last month after 2795 miles were covered on asphalt and gravel. The Clio Rally3 is the work of engineers at Renault's Viry-Chatillon motorsport HQ south of Paris, its Alpine manufacturer base in Dieppe and the Alpine F1 factory in Enstone. It's set

to be officially unveiled in Andorra on January 15 with the homologation process due to be completed in April.

M-Sport Poland unveiled its Fiesta-based Rally3 contender in December 2020 ahead of Estonian driver Ken Torn giving the car a debut win on a Finnish event in March 2021. It's used as the base car for the Junior WRC Championship and is highly regarded by JWRC ace Jon Armstrong.

RALLY2 PRIZE PACKAGE REVEALED FOR JUNIOR WRC CHAMPION

Whoever wins the Junior WRC Championship in 2023 can count on a four-event programme of World rounds in 2024 driving a Ford Fiesta Rally2 as their prize, M-Sport has confirmed.

The prize package, which also includes a test prior to each event, plus the full allocation of Pirelli tyres, is regarded as one of the biggest in international rallying and was secured

by Robert Virves for 2023 after the Estonian beat Northern Ireland's Jon Armstrong to the JWRC title on the winner-takes-all Acropolis Rally finale in Greece last September.

M-Sport recently revealed its five-round Junior WRC calendar for 2023, the second year the Ford Fiesta Rally3 built in Poland will be used as the base car for the arrive-and-drive series.



Virves was the top Junior in 2023

RALLY FANS TO GET ROUND-THE-CLOCK TV

WRC Promoter, the German firm behind the promotion of the World and European championships, has announced a round-the-clock app-based streaming service due for launch by the middle of next year.

Rally.TV is being touted as an evolution of the WRC+ platform and viewers can watch live and on-demand coverage of all WRC and ERC events, plus the World Rallycross Championship.

Subscribers to WRC+ will get an upgrade to their existing subscription to Rally.TV, which is being established as a 24/7 channel offering exclusive feature content in addition to its live and on-demand event coverage.

A range of annual and monthly subscription packages will be available to purchase from this month.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Paul Lawrence, Kevin Money



The Welsh Championship has no 2023 promoter...

MN SAYS...

It is odd that what is normally a routine process is taking far longer this time around. The existing contract periods were extended during the Covid years but new multi-year contracts are due come into place for the 2023 season and beyond. The start of the season is now eight weeks away.

Right now, six of our best and most popular championships remain under question about their status as Motorsport UK British championships. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, this delay is not good for championships, event organisers and competitors as they plan for 2023.

MN understands that Motorsport UK is seeking enhanced commercial deals in return for the Motorsport UK endorsement. However, running a rally championship is largely a thankless task involving considerable work and little, if any, financial return for most championship promoters. Simply balancing the books at the end of the year is the target and having to find further funds to retain a Motorsport UK tag could be a considerable burden, particularly in the current economic climate.

MN sincerely hopes that the matter can be resolved soon so that everyone can move on and plan the 2023 season.

NATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP CONTRACTS STALL FOR 2023

Series promoters for UK series still being finalised ahead of next year

By Paul Lawrence

The situation regarding six key rally championships and their status as Motorsport UK British championships remained under question as this issue of Motorsport News went to press.

Back in the summer Motorsport UK, the sport's governing body, invited tenders for the promotion and

organisational rights for the British Asphalt and British Historic Rally Championship as well as the English, Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Rally Championships. MN understands that few, if any, new bidders came forward.

Initially, announcements about the tenders were expected by the end of September, but these have been repeatedly delayed, while ongoing

discussions and negotiations have taken place between Motorsport UK and the potential organisers. No agreement has yet been reached.

In a statement Motorsport UK told MN: "Motorsport UK and the potential championship organisers are currently in contractual discussions. Motorsport UK reserves the right to extend the timescales advertised in the tender documents should it be required, and we look

forward to concluding the process at the earliest opportunity."

MN believes that the key issues preventing the contracts being finalised are the commercial terms expected from the championship organisers and it remains to be seen if a resolution can be found. Alternatively, the series promoters may look to run very similar championships in 2023, but without the Motorsport UK British tag.

YOUNG CO-DRIVERS TO BE BOOSTED IN ASPHALT CHAMPIONSHIP



Johnnie Mackay claimed the preceding under 25 award

Co-drivers under the age of 25 will be in the spotlight within the Motorsport News-supported Protire Asphalt Rally Championship in 2023.

With the backing of Craig Parry and Killian Duffy at On the Pace Note, a special end-of-season award will be made to the leading junior co-driver to help them progress their career.

As well as a whole set of essential co-driving tools, they will receive access to On the Pace Note training courses and on-event support from Parry and Duffy in 2024. To qualify, co-drivers registering for the championship must be under the age of 25 at January 1.

Championship organisers Paul Morris and Paul Wakely are both experienced and current co-drivers and are keen to help

the next generation of youngsters make their mark.

Morris told MN: "The championship is run by two co-drivers and we want to help develop and bring on the best of the young co-drivers. It would be fantastic if one of them went on to win the championship. We will be there on the events to help with support and advice if needed. The UK has a great record of breeding some of the very best young co-drivers and I would like to thank Craig and Killian for their support."

On the Pace Note also backed the previous under 25 drivers' award, which was won by Johnnie Mackay, 21, and his reward will be five sets of one-day notes and DVDs for the coming season.



Roskell Junior shone on his second rally

ROSKELL JUNIOR IMPRESSES ON R5 DEBUT

Dan Roskell contested only his second-ever rally when he tackled the Winter Stages at Croft, in his father Neil's Ford Fiesta R5.

He competed in a Ford Escort Mk2 at Cadwell Park in April, but his R5 debut was a belated birthday present. With experienced navigator Sion Cunliffe alongside, he was fifth quickest on the opening stage and retained the place throughout the day with an impressive performance.

Dan, 27, told MN: "I drove the car for the first time at Blyton four days before the rally, but the

conditions were awful. I didn't really want to know what times I was doing or where I was lying, but one of the crew told me when we came back to service. We started on the super-soft slick tyres and they worked OK. Then it began to dry out more and the R5 felt a much more controlled drive than the Escort, more like my track car on the sim."

"It's harder watching him than driving myself," said Neil, after Dan brought the car to the finish without a scratch. There are no further plans for another outing.



Vaulkhard enjoyed his debut

FORMER TOURING CAR RACER MAKES RALLYING DEBUT

Former World and British Touring Car racer Harry Vaulkhard made his rallying debut at his local Croft circuit recently in a Suzuki Swift from Peter Gwynne's stable.

A decade on from his time in the WTCC, Vaulkhard has been competing in rallycross

and has even made a low-key return to racing, but this was his rallying debut.

Vaulkhard said: "I did my BARS test in this car as well, but that was my first time in competition. I didn't have a working intercom for the first stages, so couldn't hear my

navigator Marc Fowler."

"I only started hitting things when I could hear him, but then it just cut out on us." He retired with two stages left.

"Well that was a great day," said Vaulkhard. "A slightly early end to my first rally but I will definitely be back!"

RALLY NEWS

WOOD WINS FIRST FIRC TITLE AT THE SIXTH ATTEMPT

Mitsubishi Lancer driver David Wood has won his first Flanders International Rally Challenge championship after six attempts.

Wood and co-driver Alan Jackson took the title at the recent Six Hours of Kortrijk Rally, despite having to retire with a broken driveshaft bearing. Two wins in the Modern 4WD class left them equal on points with Gavin Smith and Richard Vincent (Subaru Impreza). However, Smith was unable to enter Kortrijk, giving Wood the championship.

Lincolnshire-based Wood is a stalwart of the seven-round series, which caters for non-Belgian drivers competing in Belgian regional rallies. “I’ve rallied in Belgium since 2016 and really enjoyed returning to contest FIRC this year,” he said. “Competitor numbers are down from previous years, but the atmosphere at Belgian events is second to none. The competition in the classes, especially against local crews who know the roads better, is fierce but huge fun.”

The Mitsubishi man’s victory ends the four-year winning streak of Irish driver John Reddington, whose titles came using a Ford Escort Mk2 and a Ford Fiesta R5.

Wood and Jackson will defend their title next year, beginning at the Rallye Salamandre in April.

HANKIN CHOOSES R5 PEUGEOT FOR CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rally returnee keen to make progress with 208 T16 after strong Cadwell run

Photos: Ben Lawrence



Hankin finished fifth at Cadwell Park event

By Paul Lawrence

Circuit Rally Championship contender Kiaran Hankin says he loves driving his Peugeot 208 T16 R5, one of very few such cars currently active in the UK.

“This is our fourth rally in it,” said Hankin after taking a best result to date of fifth overall at Cadwell Park. After a 20-year break from the sport, he returned with an R2 Fiesta last year. “We wanted to get in the forest mainly with it and then I did a circuit event. I thought I’d love an R5 and I’m a bit of a Peugeot fan,” said the former motorbike racer.

“I got offered the 208 and did a little bit of research. John Griffiths had it and there were two that came from an Italian team. They ran them from new up until 2020. Kev Furber had one and John Griffiths had one.

“It was in my budget for an R5 and a fair bit cheaper than a Skoda or Fiesta. So it got me an R5 and it’s a Peugeot and I wouldn’t swap it for anything now.”

Hankin’s focus is the MN-supported Circuit Rally Championship. He added: “It’s just great for getting experience. But I would like to do a closed-road rally like the Manx or the North West Stages.”

MOFFETT EARNS HYUNDAI PRAISE BUT CONSIDERS OPTIONS

Josh Moffett’s dominance of both the Irish Tarmac Championship and the Irish National Rally Championship this season has attracted praise from the interim boss of Hyundai Motorsport.

Julien Moncet has labelled Moffett’s performances in his Hyundai i20 R5 in both competitions as incredibly impressive.

When he took delivery of the car at the end of 2021, Moffett, 30, struggled to gel with it. However, after an initial barren spell, with input from Hyundai Motorsport and Tom Gahan, he soon discovered its ride and handling sweet spot on Ireland’s narrow, and bumpy, roads.

Moncet said: “Josh has

enjoyed an incredibly impressive 2022 in the i20 R5, with both Andy Hayes in the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship and Keith Moriarty in the Irish National competition. In both series, he has been very quick, and hugely consistent, which has proven almost unbeatable.”

Moffett will defend both crowns in 2023 but remains

open to change during the off season and a switch to a Fiesta is an option. He said: “Tom and the boys did a great job – we have made the Hyundai work really well on Irish Tarmac. I have great relationships with Hyundai Motorsport as well as those who work at M-Sport and for that reason we will be talking to them for sure.”



Double champion Moffett has turned the head of Hyundai’s boss

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

REES AND MILLS BEAT WRC TEAM IN DEVON

A tough and demanding Exmouth Memorial provided a first win for Matt Rees and Jamie Mills in their Ford Escort.

They had been the class of the field throughout the 200-mile event, and they finished well clear of Richard Millener and Michael Gilbey. A section using the lanes between Dawlish and Haldon Forest proved decisive as the Ford WRC team members lost five minutes, while the winners cleaned it.

It was a tough event, made trickier by large amounts of standing water and only 20 of the 43 starters made the finish.

Rhys Jones/Llyr Lewis emerged from a tight battle to take victory on the Rali Goffa James Trenholme, Harlech MC’s novice-oriented event. The Subaru Impreza crew had been one second behind Iwan Jones and Iwan Roberts at the halfway point but pulled away

to win by almost a minute.

A day-long battle on the Solway Coast Targa ended with Mark McCulloch/Mairi Riddick beating Ali Procter/Lynsey Procter by a single second. Interestingly, McCulloch had been the original builder of Procter’s 205 in 2006.

There was also a close fight with multiple lead swaps on the Knutsford Targa, with Neil Jones/Phil Sant taking the win over Christian Parker/Molly Livemore. The event was the final round of the BTRDA Championship. Ethan Davies needed to gain a top score to take the series, but retired with a broken driveshaft, which gave the title to his father John.

Ian Mills

Results
Exmouth Memorial Rally
Organiser: Exmouth Motor Club
When: November 26-27 **Where:** Devon
Championships: ASWMC **Route:** 200 miles **Starters:** 43.

1 Matt Rees/Jamie Mills (Ford Escort) 23m49s; 2 Richard Millener/Michael Gilbey (Peugeot 206 GTi) +1m29s; 3 Adrian Beer/Nathan Coles (MG ZR); 4 Pat Thomas/James Aldridge (Ford Escort); 5 Simon Heywood/Rhys Williams (Honda Civic); 6 Ashley Rice/Trevor Disney (Mini Cooper); 7 Dave Webb/Jacob Williams (Daihatsu Sirion); 8 Elliott Dale/Charlotte Ryall (Ford Escort); 9 Harvey Steele/Martin Pitt (MG ZR); 10 Roger Holder/Mark Robinson (Subaru Impreza). **Class winners:** Heywood/Williams; Patrick Blight/Poppy Blight (Peugeot 206).

Rali Goffa James Trenholme
Organiser: Harlech & District Motor Club **When:** November 26-27 **Where:** Llyn Peninsula **Route:** 70 miles **Starters:** 57.
1 Rhys Jones/Llyr Lewis (Subaru Impreza) 2m16s; 2 Iwan Jones/Iwan Roberts (Ford Ka) +51s; 3 Deio Hughes/Will Hughes (Ford Fiesta); 4 Jamie Ollershaw/Rhys Willis (Peugeot 206); 5 Mark Parry/Aron Cough (Talbot Sunbeam); 6 Peredur Davies/Dylan Sion Richards (Nissan Micra); 7 Chris Hedley/Carwyn Roberts (Ford Fiesta ST150); 8 Sera Glyn Jones/Gwennan Haf Jones (Peugeot 205 GTi); 9 Tomos Lloyd Jones/Robat William Griffith (Nissan Micra); 10 Raymond Thomas/Nia Thomas (Toyota Corolla). **Class winners:** Jones/Roberts; Jones/Griffith.

Solway Coast Targa
Organiser: Solway Car Club

When: November 27 **Where:** Kirkcudbrightshire **Championships:** NESCR0 **Tests:** 16 **Starters:** 34.
1 Mark McCulloch/Mairi Riddick (Mazda MX-5) 31m29s; 2 Ali Procter/Lynsey Procter (Peugeot 205 GTi) +1s; 3 Rob Cotton/Chris Williams (Subaru Impreza); 4 Harry Marchbank/Liam Harkness (Mazda MX-5); 5 Scott Gourlay/Greg Alcorn (Ford Fiesta); 6 Rab Henderson/Peter Game (Subaru Impreza); 7 Josh Davison/Hannah Davison (Proton Satria); 8 Chris Adams/Harry Adams (Mazda MX-5); 9 Simon Jennings/Colin Fish (Peugeot 106); 10 Owen Paterson/Robert Proudlock (Mazda MX-5). **Class winners:** Procter/Procter; Jennings/Fish; Gourlay/Alcorn; Marchbank/Harkness.

Knutsford Targa Rally
Organiser: Knutsford & District Motor Club **When:** November 27 **Where:** Three Sisters Circuit **Championships:** BTRDA & ANWCC **Tests:** 13 **Starters:** 60.
1 Neil Jones/Phil Sant (Mazda MX-5) 25m15s; 2 Christian Parker/Molly Livemore (Subaru Impreza) +26s; 3 Mark Brotherhood/Liam Brotherhood (BMW 318Ti); 4 Robert Milligan/Ben Amos (Austin Mini); 5 Jamie Yapp/John Fox (Renault Clio 172); 6 Neil Raven/Claire Raven (Mazda MX-5); 7 Elliott Stafford/Robbie Pugh (Mazda MX-5); 8 John Cornall/Martin Cornall (Peugeot 206 GTi); 9 Craig Burgess/John Pickavance (BMW 316i); 10 Alun Evans/Claire Evans (Toyota Corolla). **Class winners:** Evans/Evans; Brotherhood/Brotherhood.

DAVIES PLOTS ROMANIAN WINTER ADVENTURE

BTRDA Silver Star champion Ashley Davies will realise a long-held ambition to compete on a snow rally when he contests the Winter Romania Historic Rally in January.

Davies is being allowed to compete on the January 19-23 event in his modified Ford Escort Mk2, which will be fitted with studded tyres for the adventure.

Davies told MN: “I’ve always wanted to get on to snow with studded tyres and live the boyhood dream after seeing the pair of Escorts and Mk1 Fiesta going round the frozen lakes, which was in the video story of the Mk2 Escort.

“It will be the longest event I’ve done. I did Wales Rally GB in 2017 over two days, but this is four days including night stages.”



Davies is looking forward to a four-day rallying outing in Romania

SPORTING SCENE NEWS

PANIS SNATCHES THE EARLY ADVANTAGE
AFTER ANDROS TROPHY ICE CLASHES

Title winner keeps his head to claim the points lead after double header

Photos: Andros Trophy, Tom Banks, racepixels.com



Panis now heads the points table

By Hal Ridge

The opening double-header of the Andros Trophy ice racing winter series took place at the Val Thorens ski resort, where champion Aurelien Panis shone on the second day to climb to the series lead.

Knowing that consistency pays dividends in the Andros series, Panis came out on top of a battle with the returning Yvan Muller to claim fourth on the opening day, as Sebastien Loeb Racing driver Dorian Boccolacci claimed victory.

Boccolacci secured a front-row spot for the Super Final thanks to his performance in SuperPole and points scored in qualifying. Having been fastest in SuperPole, reigning champion Jean-Bapsiste Dubourg was then out of contention in the opening corner of the Super Final and, while Muller and Panis delivered the best battle, Boccolacci drove to victory ahead of Nathanael Berthon and Dubourg.

On day two, with the Andros series using a joker lap on an all-ice circuit for the first time, Panis topped qualifying in his all-electric, four-wheel-steer Sainteloc Racing Audi A1 and secured pole for the Super Final and led from the front to secure his first win of the



Muller was a podium finisher

campaign and take the series lead.

Ten-time champion Muller continued his impressive form and was second, taking the fastest lap of the race in the process, while Jimmy Clariet secured the first podium of the season for a Peugeot e208 in third.

Rally legend Sebastien Loeb returned to the Andros series and finished third in the B final, two places better than fellow 2022 M-Sport World Rally Championship driver, Adrien Fourmaux. Loeb vacated his seat for new SLR driver Jerome Grosset-Janin to race the same car in round two, the former World RX campaigner finishing fifth in the B final, as Fourmaux retired from the race.

O'DONOVAN JR SET FOR MONDELLO PARK OUTING



O'Donovan will race the Iriz

Newly crowned British Rallycross champion Patrick O'Donovan is set to compete in the final round of the Irish Rallycross Championship at Mondello Park this weekend.

O'Donovan will race Team RX Racing's Proton Iriz RX, as long as a shakedown test on Tuesday is without issue. Fellow British RX drivers Derek Tohill and Roger Thomas will compete in the event, while Motorsport News understands a fourth OlsbergsMSE-built Ford Fiesta could also make it to the startline, alongside existing machines in the hands of Tohill, Michael Leonard and Declan Kelly.

"I'm not afraid to admit that I was feeling the pressure at the end of the British season, so to go to Mondello

Park, racing against tough opposition but without the pressure of scoring points is something I'm really looking forward to," said O'Donovan.

The Iriz RX, following development issues, hasn't been used in a UK event since May. "I tried racing the Iriz in a Nitro Rallycross round in Sweden in July but that didn't go well at all," continued O'Donovan. "The guys have worked really hard on the car since, and we go to Mondello with eyes on fighting at the front. The main target for me though is to do more development running in the car, my dad [Ollie] will race it next year and I want to give him the best chance I can, so it will be valuable mileage this weekend."



Steward has swapped his Classic Hot Rod for a SHP-built Peugeot

VILLENEUVE LINES UP NITRO RALLYCROSS OUTING

Formula 1 champion Jacques Villeneuve could make a return to rallycross in the next round of the Nitro Rallycross Championship at Trois-Rivieres in his native Canada.

Villeneuve was a permanent entrant in the inaugural World Rallycross Championship in 2014 with British squad Albatec Racing, but in seven starts didn't once qualify for the semi-finals and split with the Andy Scott-owned team before the final round.

He made a standalone return with

Subaru Motorsports USA for the Trois-Rivieres round of the Americas Rallycross Championship in 2018 and finished eighth.

Canadian publication Journal de Montreal is now reporting that 1997 F1 champion Villeneuve is likely to race an all-electric FC1-X in the next round of Nitro RX, set to be held as an ice race on January 20-21. Villeneuve is quoted as saying: "I had discussions with the GP3R, but again, it is far too early to announce anything."



Villeneuve might make a return

HOT ROD LEGEND STEWARD
RETURNS TO SHORT OVALS

National Hot Rod racing legend Andy Steward returned to the scene at Hednesford at the weekend in the Best in Britain meeting in his first outing since 2008.

Steward, who is better known as 'Doughnut', was aboard the ex-Lee Carlin and Dan Buckley Peugeot 205 which, while looking venerable, conceals a new SHP chassis underneath.

Steward said: "Dan wanted a Classic Hot Rod, so I swapped him this car for my

Ford Escort. I tested at Skegness and it went well, so I am looking forward to today."

Sadly, after good pace in the two heats, Steward was embroiled with a lap-one tangle that stopped the final and couldn't restart.

For 2023, though, the 56-year-old has a BriSCA F2 stock car in build and almost complete. "I'm looking forward to a new challenge," explained Steward. "It will be different but I'm up for it."

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

CHRIS JOLLY

Masters Club Chairman

Age: 65 Lives: London



Chris Jolly's Cooper Monaco

His parents first took him racing

"My parents were very interested in racing, so at a young age I went to a lot of motor racing events in the early 1960s. We went to Goodwood and Silverstone and all those great places. But I was doing so many other sports when I was younger, football, rugby, cricket, so I never planned to get involved in racing. But back in the very late 1980s, I bought my first classic car, an Aston Martin DB2/4, and did some tours in that."

He started competing

"In the mid-1990s, I fancied competing. I did some hillclimbs and sprints with the Aston Martin Owners Club and then decided I quite liked the idea of racing after all. I did my first race in 1998, still in the DB2/4. Then in 2000, I bought the DB2 that I still own and race: a road-legal competition car that in the 1950s had competed in the Alpine Rally and RAC Rally, winning its class in the Alpine Cup in 1954! I raced that in the AMOC championship, winning it in 2002."

He stepped up to a Lotus 23B

"In 2007 I decided to buy a Lotus 23B. That's when I first ran across Ron Maydon, as he had just bought the Group 4 series from Jonathan Baker while setting up Masters. In 2010, I sold the Lotus and bought the Cooper Monaco, the car with which we won the Pre-66 championship in 2019."

It's competitive fun

"You're in it for fun, until you have a chance to win! Then it suddenly gets a bit more competitive. In that three-to four-year period in the previous decade we had a good friendly rivalry with Keith Ahlers and Billy Bellinger in their Cooper Monaco King Cobra. We were very well matched as driver pairs, and it was nice to have a separate Pre-66 championship."

He got banned from Goodwood

"In the Whitsun Trophy I'd qualified fifth and in front of me I had Rob Huff and Darren Turner. In the first six laps I was able to keep up with those guys, and that was satisfying. Then I got into a tangle with a GT40, which I still think wasn't my fault, but the Duke thought otherwise. Goodwood is my favourite circuit, actually."

VSCC PIONEERS GREENER FUEL IN PRE-WAR CARS

Initiative just one of several schemes to offset emissions from competition

By Paul Lawrence

The Vintage Sports-Car Club took another step towards a greener future by using low emission alkylate fuel in 10 of the pre-war cars competing in its Winter Driving Tests at Bicester last Saturday.

The club is encouraging further use of alternative fuels and gained permission from Motorsport UK for the use of non-pump fuel for the event. Alkylate fuels are still fossil based but produce up to 80% lower emissions and lower particulates. They are an alternative to normal petrol and a major step towards the use of fully synthetic fuels.

VSCC club secretary Tania Brown, who was competing in the family Austin 7, said: "This



Photos: Paul and Ben Lawrence

VSCC runners have tried green fuel

is a great initiative from the club and one I am personally very excited about. We hear a lot about the demise of the internal combustion engine and now is the time to look at alternative ways of keeping our cars on the road. We all know that alternative fuels are

more expensive than petrol.

"Alkylate fuels are a first step and as synthetic fuels become more widely available, we will also be considering sponsoring one of our under 30s drivers to use it throughout our Speed Championship next season."

The club supports the 'repair,

reuse, recycle' mantra and has already made a commitment to the environment. The club offsets all carbon emissions used in competitions by 400% and has paid three years ahead to underline its commitment to the responsible use of vintage cars.

STURDY PLOTS ROGER ALBERT BID IN FRESH ESCORT



Sturdy has added a Ford Escort to his rally car collection

Ken Sturdy says his latest Ford Escort Mk2 was built for next year's Roger Albert Clark Rally.

The immaculate BDG-powered car was built up by Nick Carr at CarrPrep in Yorkshire and contested the Trackrod and Malton rallies in the autumn.

Sturdy told MN: "I'm delighted with it. We've built it for the Roger Albert Rally next year because I'd never done the event until the last one and then I jumped

in Mike Reed's car at the last minute when he was unwell. I loved it and I really want to do it again."

He says next year's programme will start with the Riponian Stages in February and then take in selected rounds of the BHRC building up to the Roger Albert Clark Rally in November.

Meanwhile, he will keep his modified Hillman Avenger for asphalt rallies, notably the Circuit Rally Championship.

OBITUARY

Charles Barter 1943-2022

The historic racing fraternity has been deeply saddened to learn of the death of Charles Barter after a short battle with cancer.

The Dorset-based water cress grower had an extensive and successful career in hillclimbing, notably with Hillman Imps, before switching to racing in the 1990s.

He raced his Datsun 240Z, formerly Win Percy's road car, for more than two decades with great success in the HSCC 70s Road Sports Championship. He gave much back to the sport and chaired the championship.

He won the title twice and was chasing a third crown when illness struck in the summer. He was still fiercely competitive and hugely respected as he approached his 80th birthday.



Ian Holt is using a Ford Escort fitted with a Millington engine

HOLT IS BACK AFTER THREE DECADES

After a break from rallying of 30 years, Ian Holt has now joined the historic fraternity with a new-build Ford Escort Mk2.

The Lancastrian was a leading competitor in an Escort in the 1980s before stepping up to a

Ford Sierra Cosworth and then an Opel Manta before stopping rallying in 1989.

He finally made a comeback on the Carlisle Stages last October in a modified Escort Mk2 built by Den Motorsport with

a 2.5-litre Millington engine fitted.

This year, he has added a full historic car to the mix and gave it a debut run on the Wyedean in October. He finished his season in Grizedale last weekend, co-driven by Steve Pugh.

IN BRIEF

2023 ROTT

The outline route for the 2023 edition of the Rally of the Tests has been unveiled for the November 2-5 event. The rally will start near Scunthorpe and finish near Darlington after regularity sections and special tests taking in much of Yorkshire and the north-east. The 2023 event will be managed by a new team comprising George Mullins, Andy Pullan and Seren Whyte.

Generations award

The Generations Rally, organised by Rally the Globe, won the competitive event of the year award in the recent Royal Automobile Club Historic Awards. The innovative event was open to family teams spanning at least two generations and drew a capacity entry with many newcomers to historic rallying. The 2023 event on March 24-26 will run in the north of England and Scottish borders.

Tour Auto route

The route for Tour Auto in 2023 has been announced, running for five days from April 18-22. The classic race and rally tour will start in Paris, as usual, and finish in Cannes on the south coast of France. The route will include 10 closed-road special stages and races at Dijon, Bresse, Clermont-Ferrand and Paul Ricard for a capacity entry of sports and GT cars from the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

Eifel date

The date for the next edition of the annual Eifel Rallye Festival in Germany has been confirmed as July 27-29. The demonstration event, which celebrates the story of rallying, will once more be based around the town of Daun in the Eifel region. The event will feature more than 150 rally cars, either originals or contemporary replicas.

Younger Masters

Masters Historic Racing has amended the eligibility cut-off date for its Masters Sports Car Legends race series. Typically headed by Chevron B19s and Lolas T70 Mk3Bs, the series has been a Masters core category since 2005. For 2023, the cut-off date for car eligibility has been moved from 1974 to 1976 in a bid to attract some later Porsches and more sports-prototypes to the grid.

HRCR training

The Historic Rally Car Register is organising a novice training day aimed at those wanting to contest Clubmans events on Saturday, February 18, near Stratford upon Avon. The day will cover event basics, practice plotting, regularity, timing and car set-up, and more details are at hrcr.co.uk. The day is ideal for novices looking to compete in the Motorsport News-supported Clubmans Rally Championship.

Brought to book

Formula Junior racer Crispian Besley has just written a book called 'Driven to Crime', true stories of wrong doing in motor racing (see MN, November 24). The book lifts the lid on a range of crimes and frauds committed within the sport, including high-profile cases like Southern Organs, Dominic Chappell, Nick Whiting, Vic Lee and many more. The book has been published by Evro Publishing with an ISBN number of 978-1-910505-70-0.

RALLY REPORTS

Photos: pro-rally.co.uk

GRIZEDALE STAGES: FURNESS DISTRICT MOTOR CLUB BY PHIL JAMES

DECEMBER 2-3



Armstrong was the class of the field



Cumiskey climbed up the order to secure second place after the four stages

ARMSTRONG CONQUERS ALL ON GRIZEDALE

Jock Armstrong and Cameron Fair took their Subaru Impreza to a mightily impressive Grizedale victory finishing 50 seconds ahead of the VW Polo GTi R5 of Brendan Cumiskey and Martin Connolly.

The rally started on Friday night with a five-mile test in Grizedale East, a venue that had not had stage rally action for more than 25 years. Niall McCullagh and Ryan McCloskey were quickest, their Ford Fiesta Rally2 stopping

the clocks five seconds up on the similar car of Elliot Payne/Patrick Walsh whose time was matched by the Armstrong/Fair Impreza.

Once Armstrong took hold of the lead on Saturday’s opening 8.5 miles of Grizedale North he didn’t loosen his grip despite a puncture on the following Grizedale South test where closest challenger Payne, who had an off in SS2, set fastest time. Heading into service it was the Skoda Fabia R5 of Arron Newby/

Jamie Edwards that held third, and with the leading trio separated by just 15s the final 18.55-mile Grizedale West stage promised to be decisive.

Having to stop and change punctures ruined both Payne and Newby’s days as Armstrong secured his first Grizedale victory having finished second twice before. He said: “I attacked it like it was only a three or four miler, keeping the pace on through the corners, going wide maybe 20 times, but that was one

of my best day’s rallying in the last five years.”

Cumiskey moved up the order to second as Russ Thompson/Stephen Link switched to harder tyres to help seal third in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9. Angus Lawrie/Paul Gribben survived a spin and stall in SS3 to bring their E9 home fourth while Vivian Hamill/Lorcan Moore (Polo GTi R5) completed the top five. Alan Carmichael/Arthur Kierans (Hyundai R5) had been in that mix before collecting two

last-stage punctures.

Charles Payne/Carl Williamson got away with a brief excursion to take sixth place in their Fiesta Rally2 after holding off a close challenge from the sensational Honda-powered Lada Riva of Shane McGirr/Denver Rafferty who finished three seconds behind.

Demisting issues slowed Phil Pickard/Simon Pickard’s Fiesta S2000T on Friday night before brake problems on Saturday and they finished eighth.

Results
Organisers: Furness & District Motor Club.
When: December 2/3 **Where:** Ambleside
Championships: ANECCC; Motorsport UK English Rally Championship. **Stages:** 4
Starters: 83.
1 Jock Armstrong/Cameron Fair (Subaru Impreza) 47m39s; 2 Brendan Cumiskey/Martin Connolly (VW Polo GTi R5) +50s; 3 Russ Thompson/Stephen Link (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 4 Angus Lawrie/Paul Gribben (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 5 Vivian Hamill/Lorcan Moore (Polo GTi R5); 6 Charles Payne/Carl Williamson (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 7 Shane McGirr/Denver Rafferty (Lada Riva); 8 Phil Pickard/Simon Pickard (Fiesta S2000T); 9 Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis (Ford Escort Mk2); 10 Mark McCulloch/John McCulloch (Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Pete Gorst/Mark Twinn (Vauxhall Nova); Robert Proudlock/Steven Brown (Opel Adam); Robinson/Collis; McGirr/Rafferty; Lawrie/Gribben.

Photo: Martin Walsh

KILLARNEY HISTORIC RALLY: KILLARNEY AND DISTRICT MOTOR CLUB BY MARTIN WALSH

DECEMBER 3

GREER AND BREEN BATTLE ON KILLARNEY HISTORIC

Jonny Greer and Niall Burns guided their Sierra Cosworth 4x4 safely through the final stage to clinch a first-ever victory on the Killarney Historic Rally.

Greer’s win came after a magnificent battle with the Sierra Cosworth of Craig Breen/Paul Nagle, who bowed out prior to the start of the final stage with a broken drive. For six stages they had traded times and were level on two occasions including prior to what should have been the decisive stage, a third run over the iconic Molls Gap.

For the second year in succession, Alan Ring (Subaru Legacy) and Adrian Deasy took the bridesmaid spot - this time 30.6s behind the winners with

Cathan McCourt and Liam Moynihan (Ford Escort) third.

It was tight and tense with just seven tenths of a second between Breen and Greer with McCourt and Ring in close proximity and all within two seconds after the opening run over Molls Gap.

Greer drew level after Ballaghbeama and went 1.2s ahead by the completion of the loop at Kilgobnet where Ring was quickest to slot into third, four seconds off top spot.

Breen’s liking for ‘The Gap’ paid dividends as he regained top spot, 3.2s ahead of Greer but a spin for Breen on Ballaghbeama brought Greer to within a second and with the best time on SS6 they were level once more. A recurring misfire meant Ring lost

touch with Welshman Neil Williams (Escort) slotting into fourth ahead of McCourt.

At the final service, and as a precaution, Breen’s Sierra was fitted with a differential kindly loaned by the Greer team. As throngs of spectators waited for the final showdown, Greer was first to appear and completed the stage for victory. The Sierra of his Breen had ground to a halt between the arrival control and stage start with broken transmission.

McCourt’s fastest stage time allowed him reel in Williams for third and they were followed by Fergus O’Meara (Escort), Donagh Kelly (BMW M3) and Ray Breen (Subaru Legacy). Meanwhile, taking the lead on the second

stage, Kevin Eves (Toyota Corolla) won the Modified category from Daniel McKenna and John Doogan’s Escorts.

Results
Organiser: Killarney & District Motor Club
When: December 3 **Where:** Killarney Co. Kerry
Championships: Irish Tarmac Historic Rally Championship, Southern 4 Rally Championship, Kingdom of Kerry Rally Championship **Stages:** 7 **Starters:** 150.
1 Jonny Greer/Niall Burns (Ford Sierra Cosworth 4x4) 59m07.5s; 2 Alan Ring/Adrian Deasy (Subaru Legacy) +30.6s; 3 Cathan McCourt/Liam Moynihan (Ford Escort); 4 Neil Williams/Anthony O’Sullivan (Ford Escort); 5 Fergus O’Meara/Mikie Galvin (Ford Escort); 6 Donagh Kelly/Rory Kennedy (BMW M3); 7 Ray Breen/Damien Morrissey (Subaru Legacy); 8 Tom Clark/Alistair Wyllie (Ford Escort); 9 Melvyn Evans/Sean Hayde (Ford Escort); 10 Harry Hunt/Steve McPhee (Ford Escort). **Class winners:** Breen/Morrissey; Colin McDowell/Bryn Pierce (Austin Mini); Tom Slattery/Helen Slattery (Lotus Cortina); Peter Neville/David Mannion (Volvo 142); Ed Colton/John Fogarty (Hillman Avenger); Trevor Wilson/Paul Mulholland (Porsche 911); Stanley Orr/Michael



Greer kept his composure to take Killarney victory

Gibson (Ford Escort); David O’Brien/Niall O’Brien (Ford Escort); Alan Watkins/Eoghan McCarthy (Ford Escort); Williams/O’Sullivan; Liam Regan/Glyn Thomas (Skoda Estelle); Clark/Wyllie; Kevin Flanagan/Mark Reilly (Austin Mini Cooper); Patsy McDonagh/Leigh

Cavanagh (Ford Escort); Tommy McDonagh/Seaghan Hickey (Ford Escort); Noel O’Sullivan/Nicholas Burke (Ford Escort); Kevin O’Connor/Mike Breen (Talbot Sunbeam); Jason Black/Karl Egan (Toyota Starlet); Daniel McKenna/Andrew Grennan (Ford Escort).

SOUTH DOWNS STAGES, GOODWOOD: SOUTHSEA AND BOGNOR REGIS MOTOR CLUBS BY IAN HARDEN

DECEMBER 3

GOODWOOD GLORY FOR HUCKLEBRIDGE DUO AFTER A DRAMATIC SHOWDOWN IN WEST SUSSEX

A dramatic climax to a fierce four-way battle at Goodwood ended with Ian and Oliver Hucklebridge take their first-ever South Downs Stages victory by nine seconds.

Long-time leaders Richard Weaver and James Pink spun their Mitsubishi Lancer E6 on the final stage, losing 15s and handing

victory to the Ford Escort Mk2 crew. Until then, Hucklebridge’s determined harrying of his rivals proved key and with his car running problem-free, his pace was consistently high.

In gloomy conditions but with a drying wind, Hucklebridge, Weaver, Ed Fossey/Steve Hobbs

and Tony Robinson/Paul Spooner swapped fastest or equal-fastest times for the opening four tests, never more than six seconds apart. Weaver survived a split turbo pipe and a flat shift mechanism problem but kept the lead. Then on SS8, run in the dark, he misjudged the approach to a chicane and the

resulting spin cost him victory.

One second behind in third, Fossey continued to learn his new Proton Satria Millington; the car ran faultlessly, allowing Fossey to use its power and grip to set four fastest stage times and just hold off Robinson. Robinson’s Skoda Fabia R5 held equal first place after SS1,

dropped back slightly in the middle stages but stayed well clear of a strong drive from fifth-placed Chris White/Jason Harris.

Results
Organisers: Southsea Motor Club and Bognor Regis Motor Club **When:** December 3 **Where:** Goodwood circuit, Sussex **Championships:** ACSMC, ASEM and AEMC. **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 55
1 Ian Hucklebridge/Oliver Hucklebridge (Ford

Escort Mk2) 38m28s; 2 Richard Weaver/James Pink (Mitsubishi Lancer E6) +9s; 3 Ed Fossey/Steve Hobbs (Proton Satria Millington); 4 Tony Robinson/Paul Spooner (Skoda Fabia R5); 5 Chris White/Jason Harris (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Robert Hayter/Alistair Crossley (Subaru Impreza); 7 Chris Butcher/Jaime-Lee Fox (Nissan Sunny F2); 8 Tim Mewett/Liz Jordan (Escort Mk2); 9 Christopher Newton/Anthony Newton (Vauxhall Nova); 10 Tom Bishop/Isobel Mansell (Vauxhall Nova). **Class winners:** Newton/Newton; Bryan Cherrett/Jack Cherrett (Peugeot 106); White/Harris; Mark Harris/Darren Matthews (Escort Mk2) Weaver/Pink.

FEATURE

MOTORBASE: LAYING DOWN THE FOUNDATIONS FOR AN ALL-OUT BTCC ATTACK IN 2023

The Napa-supported team has done its groundwork in 2022: now only the title will suffice. By **Matt James**

Two top-line drivers, a solid engineering foundation and a budget that many would envy. There were lots of positives surrounding the Motorbase Performance British Touring Car Championship team heading into 2022 but, in the end, it came up just 12 points short of helping Ash Sutton to his fourth tin-top crown.

Sutton was partnered with Dan Cammish in the Napa-backed side of the squad, and there were two other machines for Sam Osborne, son of team owner Pete, and Ollie Jackson too.

While the Ford Focus machines remained unchanged, Sutton brought with him his brains trust of engineer Tony Carrozza, his data engineer and his number-one mechanic too. This tight knit group had helped Sutton to his previous title successes.

In the end, Sutton missed out in the final-round shootout to Tom Ingram's Excelr8 Hyundai i30 N, but Napa Racing did collect the BTCC teams' trophy.

The spotlight was bright on the team to begin the season, and those within HQ knew it. Team manager Oly Collins explains: "What bringing Ash and Dan into the team did do was ramp up the expectation. There was no extra pressure, as such, because any team at our level goes into each season aiming to win. You put pressure on yourself anyway.

"There was a different air of expectation around the results which was greater than we had had in recent years. We were dubbed the 'Dream Team' by yourselves at Motorsport News, for instance, before we had even turned a wheel... thanks for that!"

Sutton himself had some pressure on. He was coming back to a front-wheel-drive race car, a format he hadn't raced in the BTCC since 2016. There was also a fourth new tin-top machine to get used to after previous stints in an MG6, a Subaru Levorg and an Infiniti Q50.

The 28-year-old was chomping at the bit and enjoyed his maiden outing in the hatchback, fitted with the new-for-2022 hybrid systems, which delivered a boost in performance at the push of a button.

"During testing we felt like we were in a really good place, but obviously everyone moves on in the winter period



Motorbase was a multiple race winner this term

and there was the unknown factor of hybrid coming into the series too. We didn't really know how much that was worth," explains the Bishop's Stortford racer. "Luckily, we were one of the early teams to get the hybrid system. We were one of the first teams to be on-track with the new kit in the car and I actually never tested without it. That was unusual, but very good."

Of course, nobody is fully aware of the potential of each combination until the stopwatches are running for real. While Cammish's early season was thwarted by a dramatic fire during Donington's qualifying session, Sutton felt the pace was there: for a short while, at least.

"We were almost fighting for pole in

round one," he explains. "I got a bit over-eager on the hybrid deployment button and locked myself out for a few seconds and I think if I hadn't have done that, I would have been fastest."

"So that meant that we knew that the one-lap pace was there but come the race day on Sunday, we began to realise that we didn't have the race car we thought we had. There were some questions internally too, because we didn't know if that was an element of me getting used to front-wheel drive again and how to look after the tyres. But then there was the fact that we were hearing the same kinds of issues across the garage."

With in-season testing banished (apart from the official tests), it meant that the

engineering department would have to go into overdrive to fix the problems. There were some fundamentals that would require some more serious work, but the short-term goal, once the problem of the car's decreasing pace over the latter part of races was unearthed, was to gamely hang on in the points until a solution was found.

"There was a large amount of drop off and we just couldn't look after the front tyres," explains Sutton forthrightly. "There was a bit of push going on in the car, a little bit of understeer, and that, in a front-wheel-drive car is certainly somewhere you don't want to be. We tried to hone in on it and we tried to take a few leaps.

"I was the one within the team that was taking the biggest leaps in terms of the set-up of the car – I think the others were maybe taking a safer approach. I was willing to take that gamble because we simply needed to get the issues resolved."

"A couple of times in the first half of the year, we were able to land some good results. On our first visit to Thruxton, for example, we were on the podium in all three races. At Oulton Park, I was second twice to Ingram and, at that point and Tom was looking like a

bit of a missile with his Hyundai.

"We thought we were getting there and when we got to the summer break, that is when we were able to dive into the car and do the things we wanted to do. We had the two-day tyre test at Snetterton and that was really positive for us. It gave the whole team the opportunity to go and explore different avenues. I felt like after that, we were able to rock up at most places and be on the money. Realistically, if we had made that kind of progress at the start of the season, would it have been a different year? Probably yes..."

ITV4 commentator Tim Harvey pointed to the fact that the car's weight distribution could have been a contributing factor to the tyre wear issues, but the crew aren't as convinced that it was the major reason behind the struggles for the Focus over the opening 15 races.

Sutton says: "It is quite hard to shift weight around. Say you move 40kgs 10 millimetres inside the cockpit, you are not even moving one percent of the car weight. It is mental when you start looking back at numbers. We did go into that area, but did it make a great deal of difference? I don't think it did."

The two-day official Goodyear tyre test

"We were struggling for real race pace"

Ash Sutton



Focus was reworked during the season



Ash Sutton and Dan Cammish locked out the top steps of the podium at Thruxton in August



The Snetterton tyre test was a breakthrough

at Snetterton was the perfect place to implement any learning that had already been done and with plenty of open track time, the right occasion to throw things at the car's set-up that simply wouldn't have been practical over the course of a race weekend.

"For us, it was about chasing the set-up" explains Sutton. "There was also an element of myself and my engineer Tony understanding a front-wheel-drive car a bit better: we hadn't worked with that transmission before together. The last time I had been in a front-wheel-drive car was in 2016, so it was almost like starting from scratch.

"Despite all of that, as a whole, the entire year was pretty good. I think a lot of people wrote us off at the beginning when they saw we were struggling but we proved them wrong and we came back fighting and we had a really good car over the second half of the season."

That is a view echoed by Collins, although he admits that there was still learning to be done, even after the breakthrough at the tyre test, where Cammish and Sutton locked out the top two lap times after all four of Motorbase's drivers had worked through a major roster of developments

on the front-wheel-drive car.

Collins says: "There are a lot of people on the outside that come up with very simplistic reasons why a car might not be working. At this level of motorsport, you see just how tight and close everything is. When you have a slight issue, it is never one single area that you need to fix. There are lot of little things that go into a solution. Weight distribution was a factor we worked on but was that the be-all and end-all? No, probably not.

"At Snetterton, we got to try a lot more solutions at the tyre test, and in a methodical way too. It was a mapped-out approach where we would start with something, changed elements by a certain percent and then go out, and then change it by a few percent more and go out again. We got to do that across four cars. We did it in a really controlled way. We got to concentrate a little bit more on longer runs, for example."

While that did bode well, there were still speedbumps to overcome during the campaign. Having been on top of the pack at Snetterton and then Sutton winning his first race of the year at Knockhill in late July, the return to the race meeting in Norfolk should have

had the entire crew licking its lips in the anticipation of more silverware.

"I actually think our most frustrating race performance of the season was at Snetterton when it came to the race meeting, because we should have been right on top of things there after how we had run in the test," reflects Collins. "But we hit a curveball at Knockhill, before we went to Snetterton's meeting. With everything we had learned at the tyre test, we went to Knockhill with an element of it and we found something on Ash's car that worked well over a race distance and we were very pleased.

"We took those elements of what we had discovered at Knockhill and applied it to Dan's car for Snetterton. We were constantly questioning ourselves, it was by no means a given that it would make the car right. We got a little bit too carried away and we went slightly the wrong way with the set-up. By race three, we had got it sorted. We were also unlucky: in race two, Dan got collected going into the hairpin and that pushed him into Ash. It wasn't all our own undoing but I think we could have performed a lot better there."

Despite that slight setback, Sutton was the second-highest points-scorer over



Motorbase team manager Oly Collins says the team has gelled well

A SEASON OF TWO HALVES

How the BTCC played out in 2022

Points gained after 15 rounds

P	DRIVER	CAR	PTS
1	Tom Ingram	Hyundai i30N	195
2	Josh Cook	Honda Civic Type R	192
3	Colin Turkington	BMW 330e M Sport	183
4	Ash Sutton	Ford Focus	171
5	Jake Hill	BMW 330e M Sport	154
6	Rory Butcher	Toyota Corolla	137
7	Gordon Shedden	Honda Civic Type R	132
8	Dan Lloyd	Hyundai i30N	131
9	Adam Morgan	BMW 330e M Sport	101
10	Dan Rowbottom	Honda Civic Type R	90

Points gained from rounds 16-30

P	DRIVER	CAR	PTS
1	Jake Hill	BMW 330e M Sport	227
2	Ash Sutton	Ford Focus	211
3	Tom Ingram	Hyundai i30N	199
4	Rory Butcher	Toyota Corolla	181
5	Colin Turkington	BMW 330e M Sport	165
6	Dan Cammish	Ford Focus	121
7	Gordon Shedden	Honda Civic Type R	116
8	Josh Cook	Honda Civic Type R	104
9	Adam Morgan	BMW 330e M Sport	92
10	Dan Lloyd	Hyundai i30N	61

Sutton says the groundwork has been done ahead of 2023

the second 15 races of the season. His diligence in collecting results over the opening rounds put him on top of the points going into the Brands Hatch showdown with two further victories, although he lost out in the final thrash to the unstoppable Ingram. Despite handing over the title, Sutton can reflect on a strong season and one that he says has laid the foundations for what will be a title shot in 2023.

"Considering we had been written off at the start of the year by so many other people and nobody thought it was going to be a championship-winning car, we came that close that I think we proved them wrong," says Sutton. "We turned that package around to something that was much, much stronger and that has put us in a better position for next year.

"We are going all out to try and win it now. We have got that year under our belt with all the learning done. We know the pros and cons and we know the strengths and weaknesses. Within three days of the end of the season, the cars were taken back to the workshops and stripped back to a bare bodysell. The work started on 2023 already. There were bits we knew we had to work on, but they were things that you couldn't

do during the rush of a race season. The team and I am fully motivated and we have had multiple engineering meetings to refine the car even further and push it in the direction we want to."

While the work has already begun, there is a genuine optimism looking ahead. The near miss in 2022 has ramped up the level of expectation, and the knowledge that is in the bank will be put to good use.

Collins has the last word: "We came pretty close this year and we recognise some of our mistakes and we now have a winter with great continuity. It is early December and we are in a lovely position to know our budgets, know our line-up, and that we can continue with what we are doing. We can go into the closed season and concentrate purely on what will be an evolution of what we already have, which is a great platform already. You don't win the teams' championship in the BTCC easily, and we did that in 2022.

"We will be looking for the small percentages. There is a little bit to gain in multiple areas. We will be going into the start of 2023 with the same expectations as we did for 2022, but we just need to take a little step forward."

FEATURE

GARY AYLES: MAKING THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITIES

The tin-top and sportscar ace who made it to British touring cars and Le Mans tackles the Motorsport News readers' questions. By **Matt James**



Ayles spent three years with Peugeot

Gary Ayles is seriously considering dusting off his crash helmet and getting back into the Formula Ford 1600 cockpit again. The former Star of Tomorrow FF1600 runner up thinks he isn't quite done with single-seater racing just yet.

The 58-year-old is eyeing a trip to either the Formula Ford Festival or the Walter Hayes end-of-season showpieces. It would complete a circle that began in the Kent-engined cars in the mid-1980s and took him, via a stint in the Superturismo series in Italy, a test at Fiorano and four outings at Le Mans, to team ownership in the British Touring Car Championship.

Ayles still keeps a keen eye on motorsport through his successful logistics firm which transports high-value classic cars and competition cars around the globe. And that means the competitive juices will never be far from the surface.

He kindly took time out of his schedule to tackle the Motorsport News readers' questions, and we are grateful.

Question: Where did the interest in motorsport come from? Was it in your family?

Steven Nye
Via email

Gary Ayles: "It was through my dad Terry, really. We really didn't have a pot to piss in when I was young, but my dad always loved cars and he loved motorsport too. It all started when I was quite young. When I was 14 I would – now they call it joyriding – nick my mum's Mini and go thrashing about in that. I would skive off school and go for a spin.

"My dad was pretty smart, actually. Clearly, he bollocked me for that but he sent me to the racing school at Brands Hatch. Even though I was 14, he thought I should go there and that would get it out of my system. You could do the course at that age in those days and I think I was one of the youngest to have done it at that stage. His grand plan backfired: it didn't work, and I loved driving even more after that!"

MN: But there is a long journey from thrashing around in your mum's car and going to the racing school to then taking part yourself? What happened?

GA: "Well I continued school – when I turned up – and I became an agricultural engineer and fitter, and I worked on tractors. I did that for a while and then I

moved up north and worked on lorries for a company up in Rotherham. That is where I went from a boy to a man... I learnt a lot, I can assure you...

"I didn't really have any interest in motorsport. But then my dad made a bit of money and to this day, I don't know how. We never asked because it is probably best not to know. Every time I asked my mum how he had made the cash, she would just say 'I don't know, Gaz'..."

"He bought John Pratt's 1984 Reynard Formula Ford 1600 car. I bought the engine, which took me six years to pay off because it was a bank loan. That was for the 1985 season. It was an SF84. I finished second in the Star of Tomorrow Formula Ford 1600 championship that season."

MN: Wow, that's pretty amazing to finish second in your first full year!

GA: "Yes, I was pretty pleased with that. I don't know how I managed to do that. There were people like Jason Elliott in it then: I think he won it. And there was Phil Andrews and Adrian Willmott. Dad and I were funding it and it was run by AMT Motorsport."

"It was really strange because I absolutely had no clue about motorsport or what I was doing. I was just a boy from a council estate in Crawley and here I was racing cars. It was all pretty unreal to me at the time. Motorsport was never really in my spectrum of things I could do, but there I was doing it. I turned out to be OK at it, but I really didn't have a clue."

MN: Did you find it easy then? Did you see it as a potential career?

GA: "I certainly didn't think of it as a career, I just thought it was a bit of fun. I have always been massively competitive in anything I do. That is just a natural instinct. But I certainly never thought of motorsport as a way of life."

"After running in that Reynard, then I went to Quest. Johnny Herbert had just won the Formula Ford Festival in the chassis and then moved up to FF2000 and I went there after him in the FF1600 car. It was certainly interesting to spend some time at Quest because Johnny and I had to work there too building up cars. That was part of the deal. That was when Mike Thompson and Ian Blackman were in charge. That was OK for me because I was, essentially, a mechanic anyway."

MN: We can't imagine Johnny Herbert being very good at that...

GA: "No, and it was quite funny! They sent him and me to America to build up a car over there. I said 'are you sure...!?!'. We had to go to Tampa Bay. Still to this



Ayles loved his Reynard in 1985

day, I don't know if the bloke survived driving it... "After that, I went to Van Diemen for 1987. I was in the team operated by David Robertson, and was team-mates with his son Steve [David and Steve later went on to operate a successful driver management business and clients included Kimi Raikkonen]. I won a race and I remember David Robertson coming up to me afterwards and saying 'hey, Gaz, you ain't doing my son's confidence any good so, basically, you've got to go'. I had just won a race and it earned me the sack! It was his team, so I had to leave."

Question: Ask Gary who was mostly responsible for his first Formula Ford 1600 win and therefore 'probably' the rest of his successful career?
Phil Andrews [ex-racer and Ayles rival]
Via Facebook

GA: "Bless him: Phil, my mate! When he shunted out of the lead, did I win that race? Ah yes, Oulton Park. I remember that. That is a fantastic memory. Well, Jason Elliott and Phil, who crashed on the last corner, had more money than me and better cars so I needed a gift from either one of them, but they both decided between them to give me one on a plate! Phil is a truly lovely guy."

Question: What was it like working with Jack Brabham in Formula 3 in 1989. Did he have much input?
Emma Facey
Via email

GA: "Well before I stepped up to F3, I did the BBC Grandstand Formula Ford 2000 series and I put it on pole for three out of the four races. But Dave Coyne beat me every time in the races, the bastard!"

"Jack didn't really have a lot of input

"I assumed the Craners would be flat. I was very wrong"

Gary Ayles

into the Formula 3 team. It was mostly run by his boys, David and Gary. But Jack was a very fair man. I was sponsored by Pete Hall's company, ICS, but Gary didn't really spend the money where he should have done. I was quick at the start of the year and I had a second-placed finish but I had a shunt at Brands Hatch which was something like the third round and they never really repaired the car properly. I don't know exactly what happened, but Peter Hall had a meeting with Jack and I think he got some of the budget back. I finished 12th in the points at the end of that season and then I went to Tech-Speed for 1990."

Question: How did the relationship with Andy Rouse and ICS come about? It started with sponsorship in F3 in 1990?

Chris Phillips
Via email

GA: "Andy Rouse and Peter Hall put some money in and Andy tried to help me out. My dad had done some work with Peter Hall and that is how I got to know them. Pete has been involved in motorsport most of his life and he was a great supporter of mine."

"Then I got an opportunity to test with Andy's British Touring Car Championship team. Actually, Alan Gow helped me a lot because he was working for Andy Rouse at the time. He was always very good to me and I think he pushed quite hard to get me into the Toyota Carina that Rouse was running. I got the gig but I had a four-race probation period."

"It didn't start too well because I smashed the car up on media day at Donington Park. Everything I had ever driven through the Craner Curves was always flat, so I just assumed it would be in a touring car as well. I was, er, wrong! It wasn't my finest moment as I went flying into the tyre wall... I shortened the car by about a foot. You can imagine Andy Rouse's face when he saw what I had done. He is not the most sympathetic person in the world, at all..."

MN: What did you think of touring cars when you got to drive one?

GA: "I had some good moments in Formula 3 but I never really had the backing. Climbing further up the single-seater ladder was never really going to be an option for me. While dad had made some money, he never really made the millions I would have needed to make it to the very top. And I wasn't backed by Marlboro or anything like that. I did have one drive with Dick Bennetts at WSR in

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Ayles battles with the late Roland Ratzenberger in Formula Ford at Silverstone during the 1986 season



Jason Elliott and Phil Andrews get friendly at Lodge during an FF1600 race, which handed Ayles a first win

FEATURE

the Cellnet Superprix in F3. Dick is a top bloke. I was alongside Mika Hakkinen in the team. I had been driving with Tech-Speed and while there is nothing wrong with them, but we were mid-pack because we just didn't have the money. All of a sudden at WSR, I was in the top three. I had tested alongside Mika at Snetterton and I was actually quicker than him.

"But money was always an issue. In my Tech-Speed car during that season, I had crashed at Dingle Dell and I got out of my car and was watching the others. I remember watching Mika driving through there and I just thought to myself 'I am not sure I can do what he is doing'. I was just watching him and knew that he was just better than I could ever be. He was so good and he had the backing to go all the way. I knew I had to review where I wanted to go in my motorsport career... I knew I had to look at other opportunities and touring cars came along and there was a chance to earn some money there if I got it right." MN: You had driven the Ford Sierra RS500 in a couple of two-driver races in the late 1980s too...

GA: "One of those was on the weekend when I got married because Andy had offered me a drive. The wife was very pissed off about that! There was a problem with the car and it didn't run, but then I drove the Arquati car alongside Jerry Mahony too."

Question: How did you get the works factory deal in the Italian Touring Car Championship in the Peugeot 405 in 1992? That seems pretty left field...

James Hilton
Via email

GA: "Yes, it was a bit left field! They wanted to make the Superturismo championship in Italy more international by bringing in drivers from everywhere. They didn't want it to be just Italians.

"The guys from Peugeot Italy had come to Brands Hatch in 1991 when I finished third in the Andy Rouse Toyota and they contacted me through my dad. I got offered a drive at Monza later that year. I was never going to keep the Toyota drive because they had already made it clear that Will Hoy was joining. "So I went to Monza and I had never been there before but anyway, I won the race. Off the back of that, they gave me a contract and I stayed racing in Italy for three seasons."

MN: You must have thought at that point that you had made it! An international racing driver with a works contract...

GA: "I didn't really. I wasn't really aware of what was going on. I went out with my friend [and fellow racer] Chris Goodwin the other night. He said that to me, he reckoned I didn't really know what was going on. I had to agree: I just liked driving racing cars. I was never any good at the politics, but that was probably just as well given I was



Ayles brought the Peugeot Italia car to race in the UK in 1992

racing in Italy. They just told me I was number two to Fabrizio Giovanardi and that was that.

"I was second to him in the S2 class in that season and I had a couple of wins. I loved racing in Italy and I love the way of life over there."

MN: Did you pick up the language?

GA: "Enough to order a beer and a coffee!"

MN: You had some good results over there. Second in class in that opening season and then fourth in 1993... and you were up against some proper drivers too.

GA: "There were some great drivers: Giovanardi, Nicola Larini, Alessandro Nannini, Gabriele Tarquini, Stefano Modena, people like that. There were proper people and that is what helped me to become a member of the British Racing Drivers' Club. That was when Derek Warwick was there. Because I didn't have enough results in the UK to qualify, they looked at what I had done in Europe and around the rest of the world. I remember Derek having a look at who was in the championship that I beat. That got me in to the BRDC."

MN: So were you making a decent wage in Italy?

GA: "I was doing OK. I wasn't making the big bucks like Fabrizio made and he always has made throughout his career.

He is a great guy and we had a lot of fun together."

Question: Did you ever get the chance to compare Italian and British-spec Peugeot 405 touring cars?

Chris Phillips
Via Facebook

GA: "Well we did come over to England in the Peugeot Italia car in 1992 to race at Donington Park at the end of the season. I think we pissed off the UK Peugeot people because I finished seventh and scored more points in that one race than Peugeot UK had done throughout the entire season.

"I did get the chance to compare the UK and Italian cars in a test at Snetterton. But they had been developed on different tyres. We were on Michelins and it was Yokohamas in the UK so making a direct comparison was very difficult. I think the engines were better in Italy than the BTCC engines, but that will probably piss some people off. But I would also say that the UK chassis were probably better than ours had been."

Question: What happened when you threw your gloves into the spectator area while racing in Italy?

Karl Jones
Via Facebook

GA: "Thanks Karl! It wasn't in Italy, it

was at the test day for Le Mans in 2000, where I was driving a Harrier. The car had stopped and I had had enough: that was it, I was going to quit motorsport there and then. I gave my gloves and my balaclava to this guy in the crowd. He thought I had just given them to him to hold while I leapt over the barrier and he gave them back to me! I couldn't walk away from motorsport even though I wanted to!"

Question: Ask Gary if he remembers being waved out of the pit garage straight into the path of Johnny Cecotto's BMW in the British Touring Car Championship in the early 1990s?

Karl Jones
Via email

GA: "I was back in the BTCC with Andy Rouse in the Nissan Primera. My mechanic beckoned me out of the garage and I drove straight into the side of Cecotto's car. He went absolutely mad, as you can imagine! I pretended that I had run out of fuel out on the circuit because I was too scared to come back into the pits afterwards. I just knew I didn't want to go back and face him..."

"We always qualified alongside each other and it was a nightmare. We used to be racing each other all the time and I remember on one occasion when he couldn't overtake me and it just got all

punchy out on circuit, as you can imagine. Even after the flag, we were still going at it. I remember in parc ferme I remember saying to him 'if you can't overtake me, I suggest you change your f**king job'. At that point, he actually wanted to kill me. We were like a couple of chickens in a coop pecking at each other. We get on alright together now though."

Question: How was the part-season in semi-works Nissan in 1996?

Michael J Gillespie
Via Facebook

MN: How semi-works was it?

GA: "It wasn't works at all. It was just Andy Rouse fielding the car because he was trying to get a full factory deal for the year after. There was a bit of effort put in at the beginning of the programme and then the balloon popped because Rouse knew that he wasn't going to get the deal from Nissan.

"That made things hard work. My team-mates were Jamie Spence and Owen McAuley that season. Both are very quick drivers and Jamie really should have made it to Formula 1 – the trouble was, he kept punching people. He went on to become a boxer and he was very, very good at that.

"In the BTCC, it was a difficult year. We had our moments at places like

"I went to Monza for a one-off for Peugeot - and I won the race"

Gary Ayles



The maiden tin-top steps were taken in the mighty Sierra RS500



Funding battles meant that Formula 3 was a struggle for Ayles



Ayles shared this Ferrari at Le Mans in 1995

Knockhill, where you could do alright because of the nature of the circuit. But we really struggled at other places.”

MN: Did you realise at that stage that the touring car dream was coming to its end? Or did you think there would be other chances?

GA: “I never really felt like that because, like I said, I was so unaware of what was really going on and I just minced along really trying to find other opportunities. I had the chance to race a McLaren in sportscars in 1997 after I had met David Morrison of Parabolica Motorsport at a touring car race at Brands Hatch.

“I had driven for Ferrari before that in the 1995 in the BPR Series in an F40. That was the factory Michelotto car and that chance came about through Claudio Berro, who had been our boss at Peugeot in the Superturismo championship and then moved to Ferrari. He looked after me well and he is a lovely man. It was a brilliant car to drive and I got to test it at Maranello. The first time I ran there you do pinch yourself and think ‘crikey, I have made it now...’ It was a real animal of a car, but one which I delighted in driving. It had a lot of power and not a lot of anything else...”

“I was quite fortunate really because I got to drive the Ferrari F40, which was one of the first supercars, and then later the McLaren at Le Mans, and that was

such a refined car. It was just beautiful. The first ones were essentially road cars, but then they built the longtail and it was just stunning. There aren’t many left but I was reunited with my car at a London Concours show and the last time it changed hands, it sold for something like £24 million. The funny thing is that Chris Goodwin [Ayles’s main co-driver] had the opportunity to buy it at the end of the season. I didn’t have £250, in my pocket, let alone the hundreds of thousands I would have needed to buy that car.”

Question: Any drives that almost came off but didn’t? And are there any drives you have turned down that you regret?

Chris Phillips
Via Facebook

GA: “I don’t know that I turned any drives down really: I was never that fortunate to have that opportunity. I would drive anything. I remember being on my way to the airport once when I was driving for Peugeot in the Superturismo championship and there was the chance to test the Peugeot World Sportscar [the 905B in 1993], but they pulled the plug on the test at the last minute so I never got to try that car, which was a real shame.

“I had an opportunity with BMW with the Bigazzi team for Italy and that never quite came off either, which is a shame. That would have been fantastic and

Bigazzi was going places. They were everywhere but their regular driver Emanuele Pirro didn’t really like me because we had a bit of a set-to at Imola one year and I called him a twat. I did a bit of a Ron Hopeful on the last lap down the inside for third place. I came from nowhere, I got the place but he wasn’t very happy. He put a spanner in the works there with Bigazzi.”

Question: Which was your favourite drive at Le Mans?

Chris Phillips

Via email

GA: “Well, I loved the Dodge Viper that I drove there in 1998 for Hugh Chamberlain’s team. It was a proper old car. I think it was the heaviest car in the paddock. It didn’t have a very big restrictor on it, and I loved the car and the team. Hugh was lovely to me and I earned a little bit of money out of it too.

“We did really well in qualifying [11th in class] and we were only a few seconds away from the works cars. The team looked after me well: when I would come in from a stint, they would already have a cup of tea and a fag lit for me: proper lads. I liked that very much.

“I mean the Ferrari was special because it was a Ferrari and the McLaren was a special car because it was a McLaren, but my Japanese team-mate crashed the McLaren so we didn’t get to finish that one. The Viper was certainly my favourite.”

MN: What did you think of Le Mans because it can be quite a daunting place?

GA: “I was just so naïve that it never really bothered me. It is every boy’s dream to drive at Le Mans or Monaco, and I have done them both. I raced in the Porsche Supercup at Monaco and I crashed in the tunnel when the steering arm broke. That was in 1999. I got sacked and Tim Harvey took the drive, and I think he got sacked from the team too... the car wasn’t a great one, to be fair.

“I didn’t find Le Mans scary. I say that, but I remember spinning at 200mph down the Mulsanne one time when it

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Ayles first made his mark with the Toyota Carina in the 1991 season



Ayles (l) shares the '91 BTCC podium with Andy Rouse and Will Hoy



Ayles has fond memories of his time in the Dodge Viper at Le Mans

FEATURE



Ayles and friend Chris Goodwin shared the Parabolica McLaren



The BTCC return in 1996 with a Nissan Primera was a tough campaign



Gavin Pyper won in a GA Motorsport Alfa Romeo at Knockhill in 1992

went from being bone dry to pissing wet and I was on slicks in the Ferrari. I just remember thinking ‘oh f**k, this is really going to hurt’. I managed to just miss everything solid and I dropped it in the gravel. I radioed through to the team and told them I was out. They insisted I stayed in the car and tried to extricate myself, which I eventually managed to do.”

Question: What has been your biggest mistake?

Joe Osborne

Via Facebook

MN: We take it Joe means in racing...

GA: “Getting to know Joe Osborne would have to rank right up there, as would going out for a beer with Ian Flux or Karl Jones, but I never learn my lesson there!

“I have made quite a few mistakes, so it would be hard to narrow them down. Agreeing to this interview could be another one...

“I was leading a race at Monza one time and I fell off the road, that was pretty bad. There was another one when I was racing for Andy Rouse at Oulton Park in 1991. I was doing brilliantly. The engine blew in qualifying so I lined up quite a long way back, but I was going great in the race and I set the fastest lap. I was flying along and overtaking absolutely everyone. It was one of those days when everything just works. I had overtaken Jonathan Palmer and I was coming up to the next person to pass and I ran wide coming out of Cascades, I went off onto the grass and there was a f**king great big ditch there. That was the end of that and I was really pissed off, I could have been a star that day.”

MN sets the scene: Ayles formed GA Motorsports in 2000 and the team went on to enter Alfa Romeos in the British Touring Car Championship, running in the production and touring class for the next few seasons.

Question: Most memorable race or moment during the GA Motorsports

British Touring Car Championship days as a team owner?

Daniel Voutt

Via Facebook

GA: “I brought the Alfas over from Italy and we ran Gavin Pyper and Tom Ferrier. Hasn’t Tom done well [now running the TF Sport GT team]? I am really proud of him.

“Gavin won his class at Brands Hatch in 2001, and he won again at Knockhill in 2002 in the wet and he just destroyed everyone. That was a fantastic moment for the team. When we ran the Vauxhall Astra in 2003, he was blindingly fast in that too but he also tended to have a few shunts.”

MN: Who was the best driver you ran?

GA: “It would be Gavin in terms of pure speed, but Tom Ferrier in terms of his consistency. I put Kelvin Burt in the car once because someone was moaning about it and we wanted to check it was OK. He hadn’t been in the car before and he hadn’t driven in ages because he’d probably been asleep somewhere. Kely got in the car and he was something like fourth quickest. He just got out of the car and said, in typical Kelv style ‘yeah, it’s alright Gaz...’ He had gone about half a second quicker than the regular driver who shall remain nameless.”

Question: What do you prefer?

“I told Pirro he was a tw*t. He didn’t really like that much”

Gary Ayles

Racing or running a team?

Chris Phillips

Via Twitter

GA: “They are both good, really. If you are competitive and you are winning as a driver, then that is fantastic, and it is the same with running a racing team. I really wanted to do more for the younger drivers, but I just never had any money really. There is a lot of talent out there that doesn’t have a pot to piss in. But I found it really satisfying to run drivers like Gavin Pyper or Tom Ferrier and you go on to see them do really well, it is a nice feeling.”

Question: Would you consider following in the recent footsteps of Marc Goossens, Roberto Moreno, Jan Magnussen and Kurt Luby and do the FF1600 Formula Ford Festival or Walter Hayes at year-end?

Ian Temple

Via Facebook

GA: “Yes I would. And I am seriously considering trying to do that. This isn’t a come-and-get-me plea, but I would talk to people about it, of course. But I really do want to do it. I don’t know where my old Reynard might be – I think it got smashed to pieces after I had it and it is probably in a skip somewhere, but I would like to do it in a Reynard again.”

MN: So you are not retired then?

GA: “Not completely, no. I haven’t raced for years and years and years, but I do go karting with Chris Goodwin and a few of the lads.”

Question: Which achievement in motorsport are you most proud of when you look back on your career?

Russell Scobbie

Via email

GA: “It is what I managed to achieve in FF1600, because I had no clue what motorsport was about. I just used to enjoy driving. In 1985, when I was a novice, I didn’t know anything. Even the smell of a circuit was new to me. I hadn’t done any karting. It was probably that dawning realisation and thinking ‘yes this is a bit of alright’.” ■



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FEATURE

BRSCC: KEEPING THE CUSTOMER WELL SATISFIED

*The club has plenty of new series and innovations for 2023, and it's down to basic business principles as **Graham Keilloh** discovers*



Clubsport Trophy got a mammoth grid

If you've been frequenting Motorsport News's national news pages in recent weeks, you'll likely have noticed that there's a lot going on with the British Racing and Sports Car Club.

The prominent race organiser has been attracting championships from elsewhere to its stable, such as TCR UK, Classic VW Cup and the MG Metro Cup. It's also in 2023 launching new contests, such as Audi TT Cup Racing – which, as outlined in last week's MN, looks set for a bumper grid on debut – and Cooksport Renault Cup.

The club also has success stories from existing contests, such as the popular entry-level CityCar Cup that this year was joined by the Student Motorsport Challenge giving opportunities to university and college teams.

And while BRSCC had the setback for 2023 of its losing Caterham's large suite of championships, an association that stretched three decades, the plus column far exceeds the minus.

So what's behind it all? "We're in probably the strongest position that we've been in for maybe 10 years, quite literally that long," BRSCC chairman Peter Daly confirms to MN.

"The last three to four years we've gone through Covid, which was a great opportunity for reviewing everything and as a result of various changes we've got some great championship opportunities."

But there's more to it even so. "What makes BRSCC different from other championships, and I've talked to a lot of people all the time at various race meetings, [is] our coordinators seem to be very strong in customer service," Daly explains.

"[They're] making sure that our drivers are kept up to date, making sure that our drivers are looked after on the day. Every customer who comes along is spending a lot of money going racing, racing is never going to be cheap, but they get looked after by our coordinators."

And customer-driven market principles apply to BRSCC developing race categories too, as its formulae development chief Greg Graham explains to MN. "We've introduced a number of new categories over the past three or four years, all of them with a lot of research



The BRSCC has been picking a few winners in its line-up recently

behind them,” he notes. “We don’t ever just guess and pick something and hope it works. We research the market, we research the gaps, the cost base, and we try to fit stuff into where we think there’s a gap.”

Daly adds: “[BRSCC] is a business and it’s about making sure that we can control our costs but we optimise our sales, and sales are our race entries, and listening to customers and seeing what they want.”

The chairman also heralded a change. “More than 50% of the employees of BRSCC are race licence holders and therefore they understand the products and services,” Daly continues. “I have encouraged racing drivers to get involved such as [chief operating officer] Paul McErlean and Greg Graham and [sporting manager] Luke Souch.”

And, the proof of the pudding, BRSCC’s grids are strong. As many as 61 turned out for its Clubsport Trophy Silverstone meeting this year (*see sidebar*), while some contests that were previously struggling, such as Fiesta Junior, are now thriving.

“We might not be recognised as a club with relatively low entry fees but we are actually very good at our entry fees,” Daly insists. “A recent survey from TSL showed that BRSCC’s grids on average were stronger than everyone else’s when it came to the number of cars. So we’re in a good place.”

“We’ve turned what was a loss-making club into a club which is now making a small surplus and we’ve also invested in three rescue vehicles over the last three seasons; we’ve invested in a new race hub for entries.”

“We’ve had a number of lively discussions with championships over the last two or three years, they could have

potentially resulted in conflict but in taking a firm line with championships that were starting to fail and wrestling those championships away from one or two dominant teams who were in it for their own commercial interest with respect to those teams, we need those teams, but at the same time the club has to control the regulations and the club has to control the direction and innovation.

“So that’s really how we’ve turned it round by analysing grid sizes, by talking to people, and then going out with social media and other platforms.”

The club also has demonstrated strong credentials in innovation, not least in the all-electric Formula Foundation-E (*see sidebar*) as well as the “nurturing centre” Evolution Trophy designed to help categories grow to having standalone grids. Both of these are due to make their on-track debuts next year. Daly also credits BRSCC as a leader in offering livestream coverage of its events, something now considered a norm in national racing.

But again Daly attributes the innovation to business principles. “Looking at the market,” he replied when MN asks where the ideas come from. “[Formula Foundation-E] was a conversation across a conference call involving about five of us, and brainstorming. So there’s a lot of brainstorming goes on, there’s a lot of discussions that go on. I’m probably on the phone twice a week every week to the team at BRSCC, and we’re always talking about what we can do here and what we can do there.”

And what of the future, in an age where ‘cost of living’ is a common refrain and has obvious potential implications for going racing?

“Looking into 2023 we believe it will be a tough year but then we believed that the last two years have been tough, and you get through tough years by working harder,” Daly says.

“And that’s what we need, we need all our coordinators and members and officials etc all to work harder to deliver the best possible environment for our club racers to go racing. What we have to do is just make sure that we can justify value for money.”

“[We have] conservative optimism,” Daly concludes, “we’ve got good feedback already from various quarters on various championships [for 2023].” ■

“We don’t guess, we research the market”

Greg Graham



Audi TT series to make 2023 debut

Photos: Jon Elsey, James Roberts, Jakob Ebrey

Come one, come all: Clubsport Trophy

Among the British Racing and Sports Car Club’s recent success stories, ranked high among them is that this year its multi-class ‘mini-endurance’ Clubsport Trophy series attracted some 61 cars to its Silverstone Grand Prix circuit event.

“To stand and see all those cars going into the first corner, it was immense,” coordinator Charlotte White tells Motorsport News.

“We had 19 cars on the reserve list. It was amazing to see so many cars in the paddock, so many new people to the series who have then continued with us.”

White attributes Clubsport Trophy’s popularity to – among other things – the series being open to a variety of cars; the main requirements are that they’re production based and comply with the Motorsport UK yearbook. It therefore attracts “everything from Citroen C1s up to BMW M3s”, including competitors



BMW 1 Series contest was developed within Clubsport Trophy

from other series who use the contest for additional track time and to try new things.

Clubsport Trophy also lets potential new categories test the water. This year it had classes for the BMW 1 Series SuperCup and Mazda MX-5 Mk4 Trophy, and both join the Evolution Trophy for 2023 with a view to developing standalone grids.

White adds: “The Mazda2s that race with us, they want to get more Mazda2s on the grid and then be in a position in few years to go out on their own effectively. Things like the Clubsport Trophy are a good platform for them to see how long cars will last on track, how the tyres wear, how they’re faring against cars in similar classes at similar speeds and all of that.”

Electric dreams: Formula Foundation-E

It is hard to think of a better way that a racing club could demonstrate its credentials for innovation. The British Racing and Sports Car Club is set to become the first UK organiser to launch an all-electric circuit racing series, and the first in the world to offer club-level electric single-seater racing. This is with Formula Foundation-E.

Its car comes from RSR Technology’s Steve Wills, who built a low-cost accessible single-seater, and BRSCC bosses suggested making it electric. The brand-new model successfully completed its first public run at the recent Formula Ford Festival, and its development continues apace. The timetable is having six to eight cars on track for the first races sometime next year, with more turning out for a championship in 2024.

“It’s a massive gap in the market,” BRSCC’s head of formulae development Greg Graham tells Motorsport News. “At higher club level, there isn’t anything that caters for the driver that wants to drive an EV. And that’s what’s become



New electric single-seater got its first public run out at Festival

apparent in the last couple of weeks, the number of enquires we’re getting. They can drive an electric kart and they can race Formula E but there’s nothing in between.”

“It’s not replacing anything,” Jake Mayes, who drove the car at the Festival, insists to MN. “I can see two pathways in racing: an electric pathway and a petrol pathway and I think youngsters will choose that pathway early on.”

“You’re going to be a different type of driver in an electric car, there’s going to be a lot more tactics involved: battery usage, regeneration, just like you use more fuel at the front of a pack, you’re going to be using more power [in an electric car].”

“The car [with the electric powertrain] feels extremely raw still which I love, it’s very balanced. It’s very very familiar to the Formula Ford Kents that I used to race.”

REVIEW

TEENAGE KICKS IN A VAN DIEMEN RF86

Photos: Paul and Ben Lawrence

Alex Coles has forged quite the reputation on the hills throughout 2022. Paul Lawrence talks to him

Learning to drive in a Formula Ford Van Diemen is an unusual start, but that's just what Plymouth teenager Alex Coles did as he won this year's British Hillclimb Championship Cup.

The BHC Cup is hillclimbing's prime competition away from the headline British Hillclimb Championship and Coles had a superb season in his Van Diemen RF86. He won the Formula Ford class 17 times in 23 rounds and set new class hill records at Doune and Wiscombe Park. In the course of a weekend at Doune in Scotland, he lopped a massive 2.3 seconds off the previous Formula Ford record.

Coles started in a Formula Ford last year and went into this season with the RF86 he shared with the experienced Caroline Ryder. While her son Matthew was making his mark at the very top of the sport in a state-of-the-art Gould, Caroline shared the rather less powerful 36-year-old FF1600 with the Devon teenager.

Coles takes up his story: "I'd not done anything else before driving a Formula Ford. I drove another Formula Ford when I was 15. I did two events in that and then at the start of this season we bought this one and shared it with Caroline. It's sort of jointly owned. I was 17 in May over the Hurston Down weekend."

He's had a mighty season, even though he was still not driving on the road. His driving lessons started on the startline of hillclimb courses and routinely lasted for less than a minute. "It's been a great season but there have been lots of ups and downs," he says.

Notably, both Alex and Caroline executed identical spins near the start of the hill at Harewood in July. The younger

Coles ripped up the Tarmac in 2022



Teenager learned in the Van Diemen

driver explains: "We picked up a different set of tyres and I don't know what happened, but we both did exactly the same thing. So we swapped those tyres back off and it seemed to be all right again."

That was his only non-score of the season.

"Doune is a long way from Plymouth," explains Alex. "Last year, when dad was competing there we did it all on the Monday and it was 12 hours in one go. That's a long way towing a trailer

and I can't drive on the road yet. I've got my provisional licence now so I should be driving this winter."

"My whole life I've just come with dad Neal to watch. I just tried to get in it as soon as I could and I'm very lucky. It works really well sharing the car with Caroline. At the start it was quite tricky trying to figure out who was going to run first. I'm six foot two and she's not! We've changed it to her going first, because it's easier to take the seat out than put it in. It is

much easier that way and we leave the pedals alone."

Mastering the H-pattern gearbox for someone with no road car experience was another real challenge. Coles says: "I've had lots of ups and downs with the gearbox and I was missing gears everywhere at the start. I was conscious of it on every run, so instead of thinking about your run you were thinking about the gears." However, it all came together and the results followed. Already, there are plans for

2023. He says: "The plan is to step up and share a 1600cc slicks-and-wings OMS single-seater with dad. That's going to be a bit of a shock to the system. I'll do the test day at Loton Park at the start of the season. The 1600cc class is a whole different story when you see the cars and the drivers that are in there and the experience they have."

Alex now has an apprenticeship in electrical installations and will be contributing to costs, notably for the fuel to haul up and down

the country from Devon. He explains: "Plymouth has always been home, which is not ideal for hillclimbing. In motorsport it is a long way to anywhere, especially up and down the M5, which is painful in summer!"

Despite the time spent travelling, it has been a fantastic season for this personable youngster. The challenge will get even bigger for 2023 in one of hillclimbing's most competitive classes, but he's good enough to go a long way in the sport. ■

THE BHC CUP

Life in the class ranks: the British Hillclimb Cup

For those not competing in the main British Hillclimb Championship, which is aimed at the fastest single-seaters, the Motorsport UK BHC Cup is the logical place to compete on the hills.

Formerly known for many years, right up to 2019, as the Leaders Championship, the BHC Cup is a class-based contest within British

Hillclimb Championship events. It runs at all of the mainland meetings but does not require competitors to travel to Craigantlet in Northern Ireland or to the Channel Islands, thus helping to contain costs.

A driver will take their best 16 scores from 24 rounds towards the final

championship positions and points are scored on the basis of 9-6-4-3-2-1 for the top six in each class at each event, subject to a minimum number of starters per class. If the existing class record is beaten, that will earn the driver a further bonus point. This year, Alex Coles made the long haul north to

Doune very worthwhile by grabbing a maximum 40 points in two days.

In 2022, almost 100 drivers contested the BHC Cup and it was a close-run thing as Johnathon Varley and Richard Spedding finished within eight points of Coles in their rapid single-seaters. BHC runner-up Alex Summers took fourth but

was only one place ahead of the road-going Alfa Romeo 4C of Rodney Eyles. Dylan Flesher hurled his Caterham up every available hill in style to finish in the top 10, as did Allan McDonald in his remarkable Subaru underpinned Mini Special. Robbie Birrell rounded out the top 10 in his potent V6 Lotus Exige.



Rodney Eyles was runner up in Alfa Romeo 4C

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SPORTING SCENE

Photos: mkpics.net, racepixels.com

GRADING THE BEST IN BRITAIN

It was cold, but the racing action warmed the soul at Hednesford Hills on Sunday. By David Addison



Waller-Barrett and Glen Bell (r) get close



The entry wasn't packed out, but the on-track action made up for it

I am officially suffering from lactose. Not an aversion to dairy products, but I fear that three of my 10 toes may not have made it back from Staffordshire. It was Arctic. Freezing weather aside, Hednesford's Best in Britain meeting was a cracking way to end the season. There was stonking racing across all four classes, and in a way the wintery weather helped as a slippery and damp circuit added to the drama. Another plus

was the fact that the grids weren't graded, but out of a hat which made for plenty of variety in the two heats per class. Downsides? Well, and here's a discussion point, it was delaying the presentations of the National Hot Rods and two-litre Hot Rods Best in Britain races until video evidence had been reviewed. Good or bad? Your call. On the plus side, you knew who had won, rather than thinking it was Adam Hylands in the Nationals Hot Rods and then reading in MN that it was really Carl Waller-Barrett, for example,

but it delayed proceedings and left people getting grumpy and colder. Personally, I am in favour: better that than a result declared hours, days or weeks later. It did reinforce my view that hell will freeze over, as I felt it did after heat two, before I become a race official. ... Oh, and National Hot Rods: 21 of you? Really? From England, Scotland and he two bits of Ireland? Twenty-one? Yeah, I know that many teams were eager to work on cars for 2023, but it wasn't as though this was date dropped on you from

Spedeworth a week ago... come, on, for the pinnacle of non-contact oval racing, to generate the weakest grid of the four classes at the weekend wasn't impressive. But the racing was mega. All day, be it the Superstox field having a rare trip to Staffordshire or the Stock Rods and two-litre Hot Rods. Even at this late stage of the season there was no shortage of enthusiasm to go racing. Adam Hylands deserves a mention for the stoical way that he handled losing his National Hot Rod Best in Britain title post-race, while

John Smith was a hero in Stock Rods. Yes, he won the title from pole, but taking third in heat one from 29th was outstanding, And while I accept it was cold, where we you all? For a day of top-drawer oval racing, more of you should have been there for a day of drama and close racing. If you think oval racing is some grubby sort of racing not to be encouraged, you need to catch yourself on. It is raw, pure and a fantastic adrenalin rush. When does 2023 start? ■

NATIONAL HOT RODS, HEDNESFORD: BEST IN BRITAIN BY GRAHAM BROWN DECEMBER 4

HYLANDS WINS BUT CW-B IS BEST

After a race-long lead battle between Adam Hylands and Carl Waller-Barrett, Hylands was still in front when they passed the chequers. But a black cross for Hylands for a jumped start almost before they'd started the first lap counted against him, the steward issuing a two-place penalty to hand the Best in Britain title to Waller-Barrett. Perry Cooke, the other driver to benefit from Hylands' woe, moved up to second place. Earlier rain created a really greasy track for the opening heat. Billy Wood briefly snatched the lead from pole before losing it just as quickly to Aaron Dew. The pair passed and repassed as everybody scrabbled for grip but the driver who had things sorted best was Hayden Ballard and once he hit the front he steadily left the rest behind. The fight for positions was far from sorted though, with much trading of places until a coming together along the back straight put Billy Wood in the wall. He was able to continue but obviously had damage and fell way off the pace. Going beyond half distance Cooke got up to second but he faded in the closing

stages. Hylands, fellow Northern Irishman Glenn Bell and Chris Haird all got past to finish in that order. The steadily drying oval gave a very different race with rather less contact for the second encounter. Jack Blood took a commanding lead at the green flag but Waller-Barrett was able to close right up on the leader's bumper when Blood encountered backmarkers nearing the finish. Once they were back on open road though Blood pulled away once more and was comfortably ahead again by flag fall. As for the rest, Jason Kew had a lonely race in third until the last few laps when first Bell and then Paul Wright caught him, but neither were able to alter the finishing order. Third and fourth places in the heats were sufficient to net Bell pole for the final. But the first attempt to get the race underway had the poleman go spinning as the pack hustled towards the green flag. Wright collected Bell who was out almost on the spot with damage although Wright was able to take the restart albeit with deranged tracking. With a space in the grid for the missing

Bell the temptation was always going to be there for someone to close down that space, and that someone was Hylands, giving rise to the early black cross. But potential penalties notwithstanding, the lively and entertaining opening laps skirmishes between Hylands, Waller-Barrett, Kew and Blood still seemed likely to determine the eventual winner. Eventually Hylands and Waller-Barrett took charge and commenced their fight to the finish, while Kew ran third for a time before falling out with a flat. Nearing the finish backmarkers briefly gave Waller-Barrett a shot at making a pass but there really wasn't anywhere for him to go and ultimately it took the steward to unseat Hylands. Results Organiser: Incarace When: December 4 Where: Hednesford Hills Raceway Starters: 22 Heat one: 1 Hayden Ballard (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Adam Hylands (Vauxhall Tigra); 3 Glenn Bell (Ford Fiesta); 4 Chris Haird (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Perry Cooke (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Jason Kew (Ginetta G40R); 7 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Derek McMillan (Vauxhall Tigra). Heat two: 1 Jack Blood (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra); 3 Kew; 4 Bell; 5 Paul Wright (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Hylands; 7 Haird; 8 McMillan. Final: 1 Waller-Barrett; 2 Cooke; 3 Hylands; 4 Billy Wood (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Blood; 6 Aaron Dew (Ginetta G40R); 7 Wright; 8 Andy Lane (Ginetta G40R); 9 Ivan Grayson (Ford Fiesta); 10 Nick Roots (Vauxhall Tigra).



Adam Hylands fends off the pressure from Carl Waller-Barrett



English points champion Carl Waller-Barrett was awarded the win

COLUMNIST

FREDRIK AHLIN



Why the Swedish sensation and former BRC frontrunner is returning to rallying next year

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Ahlin ran in the UK in 2017



Ahlin tackles Rally Sweden in 2018 in his Skoda

Iretired in 2019 from professional rallying after trying to get to the top. How old was I back then? I was around 28 I guess. I didn't have the motivation to find the teams, the money, the sponsorship and so on but I got this call from Mattias Bengtsson who is the team owner of Team Nybe. I must say I was as surprised as you were that someone still had me on their radar.

From the beginning I think I was supposed to be a kind of driver coach or engineer helping out. But the more we talked the more he maybe liked my thought process and how I'm used to working within a big team. I mean, Team Nybe is a big team, they have the facilities – you've maybe seen them on Facebook – and they have the people. But they don't have the experience so to speak from running a top professional team.

There are a lot of those top R5 teams in the UK but in Sweden it's actually very few. The only professional team is probably the EKS team from Mattias Ekstrom.

So they first of all needed experience from someone to come in, but the more we talked and the further the discussions went, the idea came up of 'why don't you drive a car as well?' Of course the money situation was a big talking point but when that was quickly sorted out and I was sold, I called Joakim [Sjoberg, co-driver] because that was also the main thing to get him alongside me. He had also retired, he did the last year with Tom Kristensson in 2020 and won the JWRC with him and then he also retired from

professional rallying. I called him and we both were feeling that this kind of works out.

It's not a European championship calendar with 10-plus weeks away from home and the family. In the Swedish championship I think we're going to do the five rounds and maybe two test rallies. And maybe we are looking into doing the Rally of Scandinavia, the ERC round that is based in Karlstad where I live. OK, that one will be a week but otherwise we're talking maybe going from home Thursday, do the recce Friday and then do some stages the Friday night and you finish the rally on Saturday which is more handleable. You don't have travel days in the same sense, you don't have to be so much away from family and work. He thought that sounded nice and fun, so when he said yes, I said yes, and here we are.



Ahlin in the CA1 Sport Ford Fiesta in GB in 2016

Since I stopped driving I've still been involved in rallying. In 2020 and 2021 I was very involved with Adam Westlund who is a young talented Sweish driver who drives in the Rally4 class. So I was very involved with him, being there on most of the rallies, tests and just supporting him with the experience I've got. But let's say I've not been missing driving, I actually haven't even thought about it. It's like I've stopped, I'm not going to try and find the money, I don't need to prove myself and show I can still drive, it's never been anything about that. But of course when I got the call, driving a rally car is the best thing you can do in the world so of course I was going to say yes.

Since this has been announced a lot of people have been asking about how it's going to go, but it makes zero sense to try and focus on that now or try to worry about it now. I haven't driven for three-and-a-half years, it's a fact. So why should I even focus on it? If I'm P5 or P3 or whatever on the first stage, well that means I was driving too slow, so I'm going to focus on trying to drive faster. The reason why I'm too slow is kind of irrelevant in my opinion at that point.

There have been no demands from the team so to speak or pressure added on me. It's just go out and enjoy yourself. Nobody needs to add pressure on me. I do that for myself, it comes automatically from within. I hope that maybe I can stay with the team for a couple of years and help them out in the future also as well, but for now I need to concentrate on getting ready for 2023. I must admit it feels great to be back.

"I don't need to prove myself and show I can still drive. It has never been about that"

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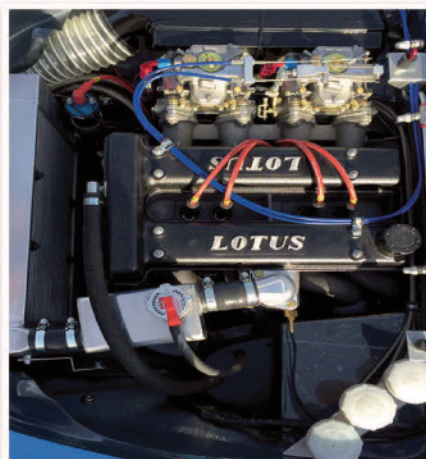
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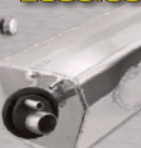
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WHAT'S ON

BOOK REVIEW

Jacky Ickx: His Authorised Competition History
By Jon Saltinstall

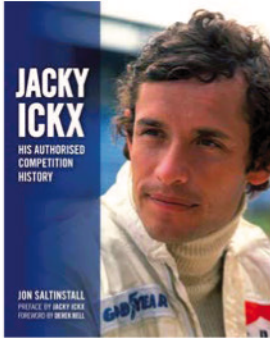
There can be few motorsport careers as challenging to chart as Jacky Ickx's. A star of Formula 1 and sportscars, there's even so much else besides in his lengthy and varied competition career, including Dakar victory,

tin-tops and even starting in motorcycle trials. Jon Saltinstall – following on from his similar work on Niki Lauda – took on this mammoth undertaking and the result is his large attractive hardback from Evro Publishing. And for it he's got the full cooperation of Ickx himself, with the Belgian great even writing the preface. This book, as the subject

himself has noted, is a true encyclopaedia of Ickx's sporting life, not a typical biographical nor a mere statistical compendium. Every one of Ickx's 573 races, right back to the motorcycle trials, gets a detailed look, including a full section of in-depth insightful prose outlining Ickx's event and its context. And in the ultimate

recommendation of the book's accuracy, Ickx when fact checking Saltinstall's draft and racking his memory could not find a single thing to change. For Ickx fans this is an essential purchase, even at the £95 asking price, but for anyone with passion for motorsport history this book would take pride of place in their library.

Graham Keilloh



Complete Ickx work

TV GUIDE



The Ferrari Challenge action will be show on Sky Sports F1

For the most part tomorrow (Friday) it's Ferrari Challenge all the way on Sky Sports F1, first with highlights of each 2022 Ferrari Challenge UK round, starting at 1230hrs, then from 1500hrs it's action from each Ferrari Challenge Europe event. And on Saturday the channel shows them all again. Sky Sports F1 also once again shows each of this year's W Series rounds in turn, first today then again on Sunday. There's a chance late

tomorrow to watch highlights of this year's Autosport Awards, that's on Sky Sports F1 at 2300hrs-0000hrs. You can also catch the best of last weekend's Killarney Historic Rally on Viaplay Xtra, that's on at 1200hrs-1300hrs and 1730hrs-1830hrs on Saturday, then again Sunday and Monday. While early on Sunday on ITV4 there's Motorsport UK at 0600hrs-0655hrs that shows Ginetta GT4 Supercup and Porsche Carrera Cup GB

from Silverstone, and it's followed immediately by Motorsport Mundial at 0655hrs-0725hrs. Then early next week BT Sport offers chances to watch highlights from last weekend's Australian Supercars season finale races from Adelaide. The two races are on BT Sport 2 on Monday at 2000hrs-2100hrs and 2100hrs-2200hrs respectively, then they're on again on Tuesday on BT Sport 3 from 1100hrs.

Graham Keilloh

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Volkswagen Golfs old and new tackle the Brands Hatch sweepers. Photo from Gary Hill



David Harbey gets all arty at Brands Hatch



Abu Dhabi, from Dean Chilvers



Peter Atkins from Silverstone



Richard Salisbury's rally photo



Another shot from Peter Atkins

NEXT EDITION

OUT THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15



CELEBRATING FIVE DECADES OF THE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

We look back on the highs and lows and those who have shone on the biggest stages of all



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